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The end of deference

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Aleksandr Timofeevsky writes on film for *Moscow News*

Oscar Wilde may seem a strange point of departure for an editorial in this magazine, since he died as cinema was born. But it is not simply that he is discussed in Jon Savage's article on *Poison* and is inevitably a reference for gay filmmakers such as Haynes and Jarman that makes him relevant to this issue. It is that as we live through our own *fin de siècle*, Oscar Wilde – an Irish gay writer living in England and imprisoned by the state for his sexuality – seems to have things to say about nationalism and the state, which are relevant to the arguments in the issue about the relationship between the state, television and film.

In *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, Wilde recognised rather early that “no Authoritarian Socialism will do”, arguing for a state and society which sustained difference rather than insisted upon deference. And it is hard not to feel that in general terms these two versions of statehood have been struggling dramatically for supremacy in the Soviet Union in the last month, as Julian Graffy's article on Soviet cinema suggests.

It may be that the emergence of new (or rather old) nations in central and east Europe will lead to a flowering of a new range of cinemas and televisions – although financial constraints may be overwhelming. But equally, it may be that these ‘new’ nations will want to use cinema and television to nourish national identities starved under the old empires – and thus place new political constraints (in addition to commercial ones) on cinema and television.

Whatever are the problems of television and cinema in their relationship to the

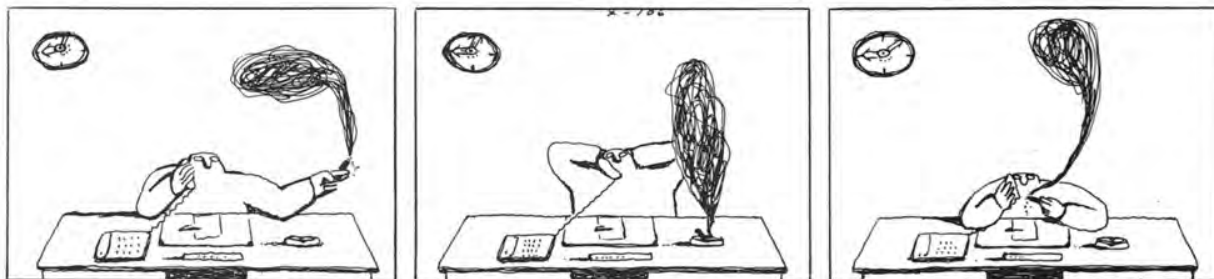
British state, they are, thankfully, different in kind from those of the state-sponsored systems of central and east Europe. Yet as Graham Murdock's piece on the future of television argues, we can hardly be complacent about the commitment of British television in its present incarnations to sustaining a seriously pluralistic democracy.

Now it may seem a long way from these matters to a film such as Jarman's *Edward II*, but that is not the case. In a culture where everything is legitimated by precedence, contemporary arguments about the state and democracy in Britain, for good historical reasons, often return to the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Seen within this context, *Edward II* takes its place alongside works as various as Brownlow's *Winstanley*, Olivier's and Branagh's *Henry V*, Reeves' *Witchfinder General* and Howard Barker's television film, *Pity in History*, as works that are about the origins of the present crisis.

One of the things that is fascinating about *Edward II* is how it shows, in a particular stark and brutal form, how the state imposed a single identity – repressing difference – on the peoples of these islands. It may be that an over-centralised Britain needs its own modest perestroika, one that recognises, as Graham Murdock's article argues, that the centre should not hold, and that we need to work towards institutions and practices that will sustain not a single national culture, but the multiplicity of identities and commitments that are available here. Oscar Wilde, if he were here, would have seen the sense in this.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, we've now tested the picture with an upbeat surprise ending, a downbeat ambiguous ending and a downbeat ending with an upbeat twist, nothing seems to be working... I think we should seriously consider re-shooting everything up to the beginning of the ending...'

Rules of the game

Lem Dobbs

A while ago, sitting in my car on a freeway offramp, I gave a man some money – not because the cardboard sign he was sitting next to asked for it (I can steel my heart against the misfortunes of others as well as you can), but because he was reading a book. In our insufferable climate of political correctness, even giving can make you feel guilty; no doubt my small bit to alleviate the 'homeless problem' would be outweighed, in Thought Police circles, by the elitist motivation behind it.

But this guy was reading a book and that touched me so deeply I can't stop thinking about it. Because, I tell you, I'd give five bucks to anyone reading a book in Los Angeles – ten bucks if you're in the movie business. The old canard of LA as cultural wasteland was, of course, promulgated by the zillions of intellectuals who used to live here. If any remain, they do so at their peril.

Personality profiles of contemporary film folk suggest that the Ignorance Is Bliss movement will soon constitute a major political party. Where people once thought it prudent to hide their witlessness, the new confessional atmosphere demands they shout it from the rooftops.

Misinformation

Studio executives prattle on with positive glee about their lack of experience, admitting they fell into the movie business as if out of a plane and only saw their first movie last Tuesday. Directors hired to remake films of the past routinely profess ignorance of the originals and indeed – with sheepish grins of mock embarrassment – reveal they didn't even know until half way through the shoot that there was an original. Actors, still valiantly clinging to their position as vanguard of the unenlightened, disclose, one and all, that it was the 'reading disorder' diagnosed in childhood that forced them to find an emotional outlet in flights of their own imagination. (Their all-time favourite is *The Catcher in the Rye*, the one book people who don't read have read.)

No matter how quickly you run in and out of Book Soup, the one vaguely adequate bookshop in Hollywood, you won't avoid overhearing someone returning an art book because it "wasn't the right size" for their coffee table. And each week brings a new variation on the legend of the bimbo development girl who's been rushing around trying to find out who represents the "hot new writer" she's just discovered – F. Scott Fitzgerald.

William Goldman didn't go nearly far enough when he coined his now incredibly worn phrase: "Nobody knows anything". Increasingly, nobody here knows anything about anything. And worst of all are the people who think they do. The remake producers who call you up and

say, "There's an old Robert Siodmak film called *The Suspect*...", to which I have to resist the urge to snap back, "Hmmm. Don't think I know it. What other films did Robert Siodmak direct?" These films they've somehow been steered towards are always made "back" in 1945, as if knowledge of 1945's exact chronological whereabouts is itself uncertain.

The next time you find yourself cornered by a self-proclaimed "Frank Capra freak", ask him or her about *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*. Watch the blank look pass over the face of the film-school cretin who's told you Howard Hawks is his favourite director when you mention *Tiger Shark*. Alas, this game wears thin very quickly and only makes you sad. When you first came to town it wasn't a game. You thought in all innocence you could mention even the most famous classic films as reference points in script meetings and not be looked at like the man in the moon.

All over Hollywood people are scoring conversational points by misinforming one another. The producer of *Mobsters* was recently caught in print saying his Brat Pack cast were the same ages as Cagney and Bogart when they made *The Roaring Twenties*. The journalist was savvy enough to correct him – Cagney and Bogart were forty at the time. "But I was told", was the producer's excuse, the excuse for all of Hollywood. They don't know.

One thing they do know, as they keep insisting, is that "the audience is so much more sophisticated nowadays". Of course. The newspaper advertisement for *Mobsters* heralds a quote from 'critic' Jim Whaley: "Mobsters joins *The Godfather* as one of the greatest gangster films ever made!" Punt-

ers perusing the *Doc Hollywood* advertisement will see six positive quotes. Closer inspection reveals that one is from Siskel & Ebert, another is from Ebert and a third is from Siskel.

Roger Ebert is interviewed in a gloomy new book called *Reel Conversations* and has this to say: "Young people today are completely illiterate when it comes to classic films because they literally do not see them or know about them. We're going back into the dark ages – kind of like the burning of the library at Alexandria". He laments the fact that college students' shared experience of film today is renting *Batman*, that they simply do not know who Fellini, Kurosawa, Bergman, Ford et al are.

Yobbo directors

In a town where an intellectual pursuit is offering Tom Stoppard enough money to get him to adapt a book that no one's read, the appearance of ignorance is all-important. British directors making their way here are a far cry from the aesthetes of the old school. Their patron saint is now Alan (I'm just a yobbo from Islington) Parker – as a director friend of mine was bemoaning after being replaced by a leather-jacketed rocker with a better line in man-of-the-people ingenueness.

The book the homeless man was reading was *Catch-22*. Someone far more cynical than myself might suspect that this fellow was an ironist of the first order.

In any case, if it's still a career in film you want – because you have all Preston Sturges' movies on tape (even *The Great Moment* and *The French, They Are A Funny Race*) – and you don't want to end up by the side of the road... Get smart. Play Dumb.

The college students' shared experience of film today is renting 'Batman'; they simply do not know who Fellini, Kurosawa, Bergman are



'The Roaring Twenties': Cagney and Bogart's answer to 'Mobsters'

Killing suspense

Michael Eaton

Drama has always had an ambiguous relationship with Real Life. The dramatists' continuing justification for their existence is founded upon illuminating the worlds we live in and the characters who populate those worlds – to that end, Western drama has always, necessarily, been parasitic on history. At the same time, anyone who has tried to write drama based on real, historical events knows only too well that life is somehow not enough – although that world out there is chock full of dramatic incidents, they very rarely come constructed like a drama.

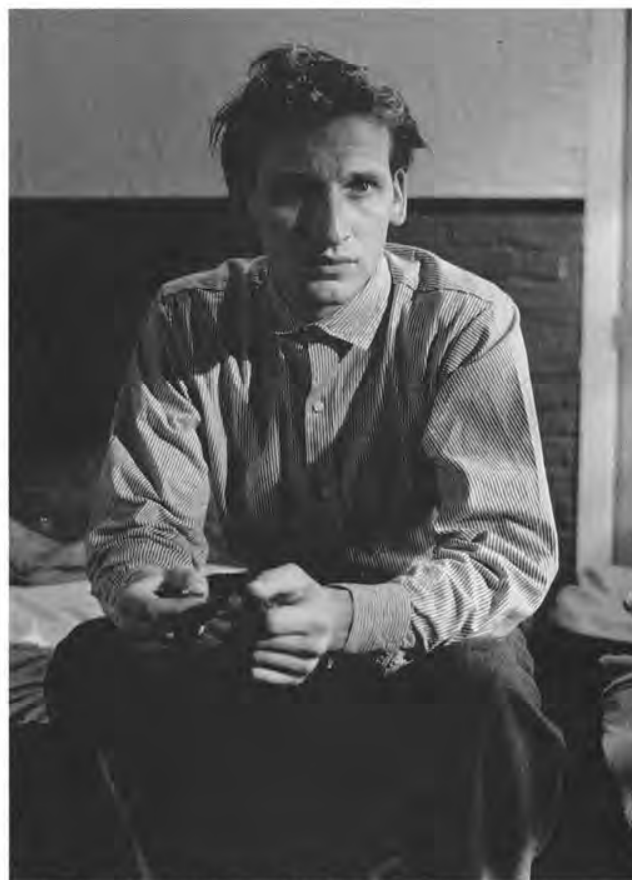
The classic narrative operates in the realm of myth, not in the domain of history. So, in effect, the role of the writer of such dramas becomes the imposition of dramatic structure on to the chaos that is real life. And this is where the temptation to twist this chaos into order lies.

Cinema has from the beginning depended on the world to supply it with its stories. But in the attempt to transform real life in accordance with its narrative and spectacular priorities, a curious hybridisation can occur. An early surviving British narrative film illustrates this perfectly. William Haggart's 1904 masterpiece, *The Life of Charles Peace*, was made at a time when distinctly cinematic approaches to ordering the way the audience looked at a story were far from fixed. The composition of the film not only looks backwards towards the stage melodramas it springs from and the events it depicts (which happened about a quarter of a century earlier), but also forwards to the conventions of organising the look of the spectator through film-editing.

Murder by the state

It is not only in its style that this film is a bastard, but, more significantly to me, in its attitude towards its central character, the Victorian burglar, murderer and long-time occupant of the Chamber of Horrors, Charlie Peace. Peace drives the narrative through his flouting of all social convention: he has scant respect for property; he commits adultery; he kills the oafish and repressive representatives of law and order; he lives by his wits and for his will. He is a perfectly prototypical Outsider hero. But, of course, conventional morality is restored when he is finally caught and, in a scene which must have been shocking for its Edwardian audiences, hanged by the neck until dead. So, as ever, cinema has it both ways: the story disrupts convention, the ending reinstates it.

The problem of this film is the problem of most drama documentary (a term which inherently invokes the hybrid): every member of the audience already knows what the ending is going to be. The inability to produce narrative suspense – will he or won't he escape? – means the



'Let Him Have It': no possibility of a last-minute reprieve

It is a common criticism of such films that all they do is generate empty anger and frustration. But it seems to me that in these times there is all too little outrage, empty or not

story has to sell itself through spectacle: Staggering True Life Events Depicted For the First Time on Screen!

I have more than a little sympathy with Haggart. In the two real life television dramas for which I was the dramatist – *Shoot to Kill* (directed by Peter Kosminsky) and *Why Lockerbie?* (directed by Leslie Woodhead) – the one thing I could be certain of was that everybody knew that John Stalker was not allowed to complete his inquiry and everybody knew that a terrorist bomb blew Pan Am 103 out of the sky. From the dramatist's point of view, the apparent ease of being handed a pre-existing plot is more than soured by the fact that your audience thinks it knows the story.

But the main reason I have been thinking of *The Life of Charles Peace* is that I have just seen *Let Him Have It*, Peter Medak's film of the Craig/Bentley case, another film about a past crime which ends in the depiction of a gruesome act of murder by the state. One thing we all know about this story is that it was the underage Chris Craig who shot the policeman and that the judicial system, in an act of vengeance, twisted the words of his mentally handicapped friend, Derek Bentley, so that there was one head at least that could be put in a noose.

So in the third act of the film there is no place for suspense at all. We all know that in spite of Bentley's innocence, in spite of the sterling efforts of his working-

class family to mount a campaign (that continues to this day) to clear his name, Bentley must hang. However much we may wish it, the film cannot change history. And it is the inevitability of this documented outcome that makes the end of this film so painful to sit through, makes us wish that we were watching a made-up tale in which the possibility exists of a last-minute reprieve from the Home Office, as in a D. W. Griffith picture.

One of the few limitations placed on Superman in the comic books is that he can't change history, he can't travel back in time to stop Booth's bullet making contact with Abe Lincoln. In order for us to stick with the incredible implausibility of these tales, something has to be immutable – and that is History.

A different truth

Bereft of suspense, the screenwriters of *Let Him Have It* (Neal Purvis and Robert Wade) have recourse only to outrage – knowing the outcome makes the actions of the state and its legal institutions seem even more brutal and vengeful. Of course, it is a common criticism of such films that all they do is generate empty anger and frustration. But it seems to me that in these times there is all too little outrage, empty or not. We have only to remember recent remarks by a senior member of the judiciary vis-à-vis the satisfying pertinence of the death penalty for the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six to realise that a film which reminds us of past injustice can be more than a historical footnote.

A common justification for the television drama documentary which we programme-makers are often forced into using against the attacks of establishment enemies is that we only use drama when the conventions of documentary discourse are denied. So when, in the early 70s, Leslie Woodhead wanted to make films about injustices behind the Iron Curtain, there was no possibility of constructing a film around the talking head responses of witnesses. Drama became the vehicle of last resort for documentarists whose priorities were in fact journalistic.

I hope the situation has changed somewhat since then. I hope that journalists have realised that the techniques of drama can impart a different kind of truth, can illuminate different aspects of people and the institutions which surround them than films that are located firmly within the documentary tradition. The corollary of that, of course, is that the dramatists have to be meticulous in their use of historical incident, even when this works to the detriment of mythical structure.

On the other hand, of course, as soon as you get away from the recent past, the mythologisation of history becomes all too probable – dead men don't sue...

● *Let Him Have It* opens on 4 October in London and on 18 October elsewhere

Going for broke

Peter Biskind

Hollywood has never been known as a place uncongenial to paranoia, and often the paranoia has a basis in fact. So when in the late 80s independent Chicken Littles ran around warning anyone who would listen that the sky was falling, it indeed proved to be correct. One independent after another tumbled into bankruptcy in a dramatic shake-out that savaged companies like Cannon, DEG, MCEG and New World. This was not displeasing to the studios, of course, which looked on happily as the little fellers fell by the wayside.

But not all, and it has escaped no one's attention that movies developed and produced by the surviving independents accounted for nearly one third (\$600 million) of last summer's \$1.8 billion gross, namely *Terminator 2* (Carolco), *Robin Hood* (Morgan Creek), *City Slickers* (Castle Rock), *Backdraft* (Imagine), and *Point Break* (Largo). And this in a summer when each of the majors gave it their best shot.

There are a number of obvious reasons for the independents' strong showing. First, these companies are smaller than the majors, with corresponding savings in overheads. Castle Rock has only fifty-five full-time employees, while Morgan Creek has a paltry twenty-eight. Fewer cooks in the kitchen also means less interference with the talent and less confusing, nonsensical input by development executives. As Morgan Creek's James G. Robinson told *Variety*'s Richard Natale: "The more subservient you are to a team mentality, the less each member gets to exercise his individuality. I've never seen a good script come out of a committee".

Except for Carolco, which has a video distribution division, Live Entertainment, these companies are free from distractions like distribution and so are able to focus exclusively on development and production. Moreover, with the exception of Largo's Lawrence Gordon, who was at one time head of production at Twentieth Century Fox, they have proved inhospitable to the kind of executives who revolve through the studios' turnstiles and seem incapable of shedding the high-rolling style to which they have become accustomed. Rather, they are for the most part run by people who have come up through the independent route, and who are therefore well versed in the virtues of thrift.

Many of the independents have first-look deals with particular studios that distribute their product, allowing them to shop elsewhere if the studio is not interested. In addition, many settle up their own production costs and pay for prints and advertising as well, enabling them to shave 10 or 15 per cent off the standard 30 per cent distribution fee. Most of the successful independents retain the rights to foreign distribution and ancillary markets

for themselves. At a time when foreign grosses often exceed US grosses, this is extremely advantageous.

Most of last summer's big independent hits were indistinguishable from studio pictures. They were the kind of movies the studios would have been only too happy to make had they had the wit to do so. So even though this group is doing well, we're not talking quality, nor aesthetic risk-taking. The companies that did (occasionally) walk on the wild side - Cinecom, Vestron, Island, Spectra, Alive, Atlantic - were all laid low in the great blood-letting of the late 80s. The great irony, of course, is that the riskier the survivors' financial base, the more sure they are to populate their movies with Kevins and Arnolds. And indeed this strategy has worked so far, most dramatically for Carolco, a company teetering on the edge of bankruptcy until its big gamble paid off.

For years, Carolco had been subject to rumours based on its large debt and penchant for betting the farm on individual productions. It was also resented for driving up the price of talent. Known as 'the House That Rambo Built', it was Carolco that paid Joe Eszterhas \$3 million for the *Basic Instinct* script, and Michael Douglas \$10 million to star in it.

Carolco finances its expensive blockbusters by pre-selling theatrical, television and video rights both in the US and abroad, but payment of most of these rights is on delivery of the product, so that production costs have to be covered by the company itself, hence the debt. On 30 June, Carolco reported a \$13.9 million net loss for the preceding six month period, as against a \$6 million profit for the same period a year ago.

Although Carolco doesn't have to shoulder the overhead of a studio, it does have to support the lifestyle of its flamboyant chairman, Mario Kassar. His salary is \$1.5 million a year, he makes lavish use of the company jet, and he lives in a Beverly Hills mansion protected by \$410,000 worth of security gadgets. The company executives are currently being sued by a group of dissident stockholders for alleged mismanagement and self-dealing.

Carolco has established relationships with a group of high-priced but talented directors including Oliver Stone, Renny Harlan, Tim Burton and James Cameron

Among other alleged pecadillos, last year Carolco purportedly repurchased 3.4 million shares from Kassar at \$13 a piece, even though the market priced them at only \$7.25. (Both the company and Kassar deny the charges.)

Until *Terminator 2* made such a dent in the summer box office, many were wondering when Kassar's luck would run out. But now observers are bullish on Carolco's prospects. *Variety*'s Peter Bart estimates that the film could gross over \$400 million worldwide (\$225 million abroad, \$70 million in video revenues, \$45 million from television) which would return \$75 million to Carolco, allowing it to scale down its debt significantly.

At the same time, the company has two Schwarzeneggers and two Stallones (*Gale Force* and *Isobar*) in development, and has established relationships with a group of high-priced but talented directors including Oliver Stone, Renny Harlan, Tim Burton and James Cameron. In an industry where hithering and dithering is *de rigueur*, producers like Irwin Winkler have praised Kassar for his quick decisions.

The rosy view sees Carolco not only fattened by its *Terminator* profits, but gaining access to a major pool of cash through its merger with Live Entertainment, as well as raising \$75 to \$100 million through a securities offering, all of which may allow it to reduce its debt to under \$200 million and build a capital fund of \$425 million. Bart points out that if things go as planned, Carolco stands to be a \$1 billion corporation by the end of the year, bigger than Columbia was when it was sold to Coca Cola.

But the sceptics wonder if Carolco president Peter Hoffman can continue to raise enough money to finance Kassar's ventures. The company plans to release a more balanced slate, with a few 'mezzanine' movies in the \$20 to \$25 million range, and some low-budget 'quality' films like *Rambling Rose* and Robert Redford's *A River Runs Through It*. Though Carolco has financed some interesting medium-budget movies in the past, like *Jacob's Ladder* and *LA Story*, none of them has done particularly well, so that when push comes to shove, the company may be forced to rely on what it does best: Arnold blockbusters.

Despite the astonishing success of the independents last summer, Wall Street remains sceptical. Investors don't like the fact that in the long run, the independents remain dependent on the majors for distribution. Nevertheless, New Line raised almost \$19 million with a stock offering last spring and Miramax Films is also said to be contemplating going public. All in all, it looks like the great wheel of fortune (not to mention the business cycle) that recently brought the independents crashing to the ground may be once again about to thrust them forth for another day in the sun.



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What motivates a director's decisions? Mike O'Pray asks Derek Jarman to talk about the intentions behind specific shots, costumes and lighting in his new film, 'Edward II'

● Edward II is the latest in a long line of personal 'heroes' who Derek Jarman has wrenched from history. Others include Sebastiane, the masochistic martyr of gay projections; Elizabeth I of *Jubilee*, the Virgin Queen whose qualities find their ultimate expression in Tilda Swinton's Madonna roles in *The Garden*, *Caravaggio* and *The Last of England*; Prospero of *The Tempest*, the ultimate Shakespearean conception of the artist (as film-maker); the Pasolini-like Jesus of *The Garden*; and Caravaggio, the original rough-trade lumpen artist. But behind Jarman's recent film of Christopher Marlowe's play is also a recognition of the playwright himself as an active, passionate man who was not only gay, but died in a fight inside a Deptford tavern. Marlowe must be linked here, then, with Jarman's passion for the work and lives of Caravaggio and Pasolini – both gays who died violently.

If *Jubilee*, made in the white heat of the punk movement, was Jarman's first attempt to shape the present by means of the past, then *Edward II* tries to do the same in a less schematic way. It creates a world where Edward's obsessive and tragic love for the ambitious Gaveston is exploited as a modern gay love affair set in contemporary England, while at the same time it retains a medieval simplicity to the sets. Typically, Jarman's depiction of the contemporary is determined by the emotional and dramatic demands of the play, so 60s gangster fashions jostle with 30s *Vogue* and the balaclava hoods of the 70s

terrorist. Edward's rebellious noblemen are transformed into the pillars of the modern British establishment – bishops, generals, businessmen.

Edward's wife, Isabella (Tilda Swinton), colludes sexually and politically with Mortimer (Nigel Terry, Jarman's Caravaggio), who, envious of Gaveston's prestige and believing that Edward is neglecting his responsibilities as monarch, violently opposes him in a civil war. Jarman's recurring themes of the intimacy of death and love, of the role of institutional violence in society (particularly by the military, of which Jarman's father was a member), and an overwrought sexuality are all reworked in *Edward II*. Images of water, especially in Edward's cell, recall the dream sea sequences in *The Garden* and the idyllic swimming sequences in *The Angelic Conversation*. The violence is characteristically brutal and ambiguous. Isabella's murder of Edward's brother Kent by biting out his throat is horrific and intensely erotic, as is Edward's murder of Gaveston's assassin.

Jarman's ambivalence towards military figures reminds us of his remark that "if we must have troops, let's have them in bed". It is a persistent image in his films, from *Jubilee* (where a policeman is bedded before being killed) to *Edward II*, where Nigel Terry sheds the ambiguities of Caravaggio for rampant heterosexuality.

When Jarman says of Marlowe's play that it "touches on areas that still aggravate people", you can almost hear the relish in his voice.

Edward II

Damning desire



'The throne and who is fit to sit on the throne is what it's all about. I made this very clear with an image of the throne that keeps recurring. Different people get on to it in different ways. Gaveston here became a sort of chattering, evil incubus in the night, reminiscent of the Fuseli picture. The smoking was something the two actors brought into it. I think it was supposed to be a joint to be passed between them: "We're stoned on the throne and fuck you" was what was going on in their minds. Gaveston is working class and not French as he is in Marlowe. I couldn't get a French actor and I didn't want a fake French accent. When I was casting Gaveston one of

the things I liked about him was his class; there is an element where he might become a vicious, Kray-like gangster in the beating up of the archbishop. And that has to be there, because it's in the character, it's in the way it's written. It also makes the whole thing more poignant – what you have is a situation where two people have obviously fallen in love and one can't understand just what the attraction is. Gaveston is sexuality and class merged. I wanted to have the North/South divide – so Edward has a northern accent, too. He pronounces 'castle' in the northern way, and whenever he did that my heart leapt because it was also against traditional verse-speaking.'



Edward and Isabella

'I have no problems with heterosexual love scenes. I usually do gay scenes, but I have this unusual scene between Edward and Isabella which is a love scene that goes wrong. Now this must have happened to everyone at some point in their life – when they go to bed with the wrong person. Or what has been passionate, in the cold of the early morning, isn't any more. I don't know many scenes in the cinema quite like that – showing two characters in bed when it's not working out and with no dialogue. I think Colin McCabe thinks of it

as my misogyny in a way. I'm not certain it is. We discussed this with Tilda. I think it's realist, in the sense that bed scenes are nearly always super-real. Edward is preoccupied, I don't think he's impotent. It just isn't working out. And he's furious about the whole thing. I was trying to keep up this psycho-sexual tension all the way through. All these people trapped in a merry-go-round of conflicting emotion. This is what really excited me about the whole thing. You can show a range of emotion in 'Edward II' that you don't usually get in the cinema.'



Pyjama party

'Ian said we should light this by spotlight because of Annie Lennox – and suggested we put a spotlight on Edward and Gaveston too. It works because it restores the theatricality of the whole thing. The spotlight is on them simply because that is where the spotlight is. In old-fashioned theatre terms, it's a good solution. The actors

insisted on Marks and Spencer's pyjamas. There was a sense of humour in the whole thing. The film needed a lightness of touch in places and this has been misinterpreted as my quirky campness. But I don't think it's true; these light-hearted decisions endear you to a character or should do, and it's what we need.'



Gaveston and Edward

'Ken Butler, the associate director, shot this scene between Gaveston and Edward and about three others. Ian Wilson did the lighting. The idea was that it was very late at night. We lit people coming in and out of shadow. Every now and again we blacked out the background so we were just on faces – then the dialogue really comes up. My couple of 'fucks' that everyone complains about are necessary in that sense. But I've left the dialogue intact as much as possible.

The suits came from a young designer who offered us the suits for Gaveston. You might not notice them but they are rather unusually and beautifully cut. I put Edward in a duffle coat for most of the film. How does one depict a drop-out and make him look monastic and medieval as well? The duffle coat was the answer. I didn't make him put the hood/cowl up. David Warner's 60s Hamlet wore a duffle coat, or at least looked like the 60s student CND radical.'



Isabella, chairman of the board

'Tilda was often in the most theatrically and powerfully composed shots, and here she really is chairman of the board, of Pepsi Cola! She's also Joan Crawford! It was obvious she had to be at the other end of the table, so we cut round to her. Although, of course, you don't know until then whether she is there or not. It's a painterly style, but the whole thing is incredibly simple film-making. I'm a naive film-maker in that sense. Early on Tom Priestly said to me that the best films are just cut – so every time the camera goes on a move, beware! And he said, "if

you've got no money, Derek, then just do a simple long-shot, close-ups, mid-shots". I've always done that because we've never had the money to set up complicated shots. With low-budget film-making you got what you could get. I always think of Dreyer's 'Passion of Joan of Arc'. I would be very interested if I could just press a button and see what the film would look like in black and white. It would probably look nearer to that Dreyer look. I am pleased we have colour, I wouldn't make a black and white film because I think that would be arcane.'



The string quartet

'Very Jarmanesque! It could be that marvellous picture of the cellist with the big dress on by Augustus John. I think that's where this came from, although her dress is green and she has red hair! And there is a deliberate homage to 'Some Like It Hot', when Edward and Gaveston enter and dance – which was the

actors' idea. This group had done the music on other films and have worked with Simon Turner [Music]. It's along the lines of the sailors' dance in 'The Tempest'. I didn't want it to be heavy; I needed to show that at some point this relationship is actually fun, they're having a good time.'



The police line

'Essentially it's just one set for the whole film. How the set changes is determined by how it is lit and it was up to Ian Wilson to invent the light to make some scenes outside, some inside, to give certain

atmospheres. The set became a metaphor for the trapped country, the prison of our lives, "the closet of our heart", in Edward's words. There is no sunlight, it's deep in the earth really.'



Mortimer and Isabella

'Ken Butler directed this one too. I was not well that day and it's done really well. I might have done it differently, but I can't think I would have done it better. I might have reframed slightly on Tilda's face, which falls out of the frame a bit on the next shot, a close-up. Or I might have put a Paganini [a wooden box] under her so that the two of them are absolutely framed up into the frame. At first, when Tilda rushes into the scene, it was funny, but we subverted that with sound. Simon Turner's music is very good with

this scene. It's rather clever because Mortimer does have these disingenuous lines – "Who's this, the queen?" – but somehow you get away with it because she has a veil on. There is an element of a real horror film (Corman's 'The Tomb of Ligeia' perhaps?) – after all, we were making this in Hammer's old Bray studios. The lighting is eerie with the slats. We decided on lighting on the day. We thought this scene was probably outside, with a lattice. It's the moment when their relationship becomes passionate.'



The cage

'I wanted to turn everyone into a mannequin as if they'd been drained of life. Tilda wanted the dead flowers in her hands, Christopher was not keen. It looked like she had received a bouquet for some performance and I like that. And he's clapping, as at the end of 'The Garden', as if he's applauding some mad performance. The little boy is always there. He's a witness and a survivor. Whenever we had a spare moment I did another little scene with him to add because we had so little time. In the actual play, Edward III must be seventeen or

so. When he's dancing on the top of their cage later, it reduces him to some sort of puppet. By using Tchaikovsky I wanted to reinforce the idea of them as wind-up dolls. I was thinking of Eisenstein's 'Ivan the Terrible', when he mounts the throne, that great moment when child Ivan's feet dangle from the throne and don't reach the ground. I couldn't get a quotation in like that, it would have been too much. There is an element of young Edward being me, but everyone identifies with the child and he is the same child in all my films.'

Edward II

Throne of blood

No more denying his Englishness than his homosexuality, Jarman in 'Edward II' contributes to a debate about national and sexual identity that goes back to Marlowe, argues Colin MacCabe

"Come death" are the words as the screen dims at the end of this great film. But it is no longer Marlowe or Edward II who addresses us, but Jarman who directly invokes the muse for this work. For this is Jarman's deathwork – no matter that he will now go on to make more films, no matter that there are two previous films (*The Last of England* and *The Garden*) made since he was diagnosed HIV positive.

In *Edward II*, Jarman's two passions – his Englishness and his homosexuality – are analysed in a historical space which he has investigated again and again: in *The Tempest*, in *The Angelic Conversation*, in *Caravaggio*. But his previous films fade into apprentice works beside the achievement of *Edward II*. Christopher Hobbs' sets and Sandy Powell's costumes triumphantly realise what one now sees was only hinted at in *Caravaggio* (and Italy may always have been a diversion): a world which is always both now and then (both twentieth- and sixteenth-century), but is always England. At its heart is the constitutive relation which founds the modern English state on a repressive security apparatus and a repressed homosexuality.

Marlowe's own murder, that "great reckoning in a small room", as Shakespeare described it, is here exemplary. When Ingram Frizer stabbed Marlowe to death, days before he was to appear before the Privy Council to answer charges of blasphemy, he almost certainly did so with that same Council's blessing. Four hundred years on, Marlowe's death is still a mystery, but it is not unreasonable to speculate

that he was simply privy to too many political and sexual secrets. It has become wearily obvious in our own century that political and sexual secrets make the most likely of bedfellows. In an age when sodomy was a capital offence, more than one Council member may have feared that Marlowe's testimony would not only reveal too much about his career as a spy, but would culminate in a fatal 'outing'.

The connections between power and sex which run through Marlowe's life and work are drawn by Jarman with all the deftness of a painter's hand. From the moment that Mortimer appears with the dress and bearing of an SAS officer in Northern Ireland, the equations between past and present, between state and sexuality, are clearly visible.

Marlowe ruthlessly edited his sources, running together two barons' revolts separated by eleven years and transforming Edward's favourites from members of the nobility into members of that new Renaissance class of which he was a prominent member. Jarman is as ruthless. All questions of national politics are reduced to one – the determination of the barons to deny the king the love he so desperately needs. This gives Jarman's film something he has never benefited from before: a simple and gripping plot. The barons, led by Mortimer and Edward's estranged wife, Isabella, are determined to accomplish one thing: Gaveston's exile and death. Once started on this vicious path they are inevitably led to assume power and to engineer Edward's death. The simplicity

of the story allows the film to present homosexuality as the key term in the understanding of the structure of English society.

Jarman casts the king's homosexual lovers, Gaveston and Spencer, not as overlearned, smart young men working for MI5, which would be a modern equivalent to Marlowe's courtiers, but as very rough trade indeed. Mortimer then becomes the representative of middle England, using his class position to mobilise a moral majority which is silent only in the sense that it has nothing positive to say, reduced to hissing out its hatred of all deviation, either sexual or social. And this hatred turns finally on military power – Mortimer's posture and dress is not that of a medieval baron, still less a Renaissance prince, but of the contemporary army, slipping from military uniform to civilian dress with all the ease that counter-insurgency demands. Edward's army is a queer nation which refuses to deny its own heterogeneity, but which, until the moving final scenes, is doomed to bitter defeat.

Jarman's whole work and life – and the two are deliberately indistinguishable – have insisted that he be recognised for what he is: English and homosexual. He will no more deny the middle England from which he comes than he will deny his love for men. *Edward II* is, in this sense, the culmination of life and work.

The film is much more unambiguous in its misogyny than any of his other work. In that gay male dialectic where identification with the position of the woman is set against rejection





Out of darkness: the state, above left, with its guardian, the military machine



The lovers, Edward and Gaveston, above right, are the victims of that state

tion of the woman's body, *Edward II* is entirely, and without any textual foundation, on the side of rejection. For Marlowe, as for his age, the love of boys was merely the ultimate sexual transgression, not in any sense an alternative to heterosexual sex. It is here that Jarman does violence to his source, making Edward's passion for Gaveston a consequence of his inability to be roused by the queen's body in a truly chilling scene at the beginning of the film. This is itself horribly overtrumped at the end when Isabella literally tears the life out of Kent with her teeth: the vagina dentata rendered into all too palpable an image.

Anyone who had never seen one of Jarman's films might be forgiven for thinking that they were glycerine and vanilla epics which proclaimed how great it was to be gay. In fact, the films are much more complex, engaging, from *Sebastiane* on, with the tangled links between sex, violence and class. It is the slogans of the 90s – "We're here, we're queer, get used to it" – which are closer to Derek's drama and aesthetics than the necessarily complacent "Glad to be gay", which empowered at the cost of assuming that anybody, straight or gay, could be happy with their sexuality.

But there is love in this film and a love which redeems history. The film is punctuated by scenes from the end of the play, where

Edward and his murderer to be, Lightborn (brilliantly played by Jarman's companion, Kevin Collins), discourse in the bowels of the castle where the king is imprisoned. We await throughout the film – the fabled end – the vicious poker which will leave a king dead and humiliated, but without a mark on him. It is this end that the film has prepared us for, as we see the homophobia which courses a vicious lifeblood throughout history and our culture. No fault of Gaveston's can possibly justify the hatred which is spat out at him on his way to exile and a death unbearable in its explosion of destructive violence. As Mortimer comes to upbraid the king for his moral turpitude, the barons at his back suddenly reveal themselves as a moral majority stretching back and forth across the centuries, an endless, and endlessly unpleasant, Festival of Light.

But after the end that Marlowe and history have prepared us for, Jarman, from the resources of his own fight against death, has contrived a happy end. As Lightborn approaches the king for a second time with the dreaded poker in his hand – and Lightborn here stands allegorically for a working class whose homophobia makes it a willing tool of Mortimer and Isabella – he suddenly relinquishes the position of executioner and in a moment of real tenderness, bends and kisses the king. With this kiss a whole history of homophobia and violence is annulled, a whole new history made possible. And Jarman, in an extraordinary final tracking shot, returns to the defeated and res-

urrects them. On the soundtrack we hear Marlowe's most poignant lines – "And what are kings when regiment is gone/But perfect shadows on a sunshine day" – and we understand that Jarman has realised a Utopian moment in which social divisions have fallen away, all sexuality is possible, and every player, however poor or perverted, is a king.

Jarman's *Edward II* continues a debate about national and sexual identity that goes back four centuries to that moment at the beginning of the 1590s when the Elizabethan stage became the privileged symbolic space for a whole society. It is in this decade that we can see a deliberate attempt to elaborate definitions, both political and sexual, which will define what it is to be English. The Elizabethan stage accomplished the cultural revolution which legitimated the political and religious redefinition of England carried out by the Tudors. The date of Marlowe's play might seem of interest only to the most pedantic scholar, but in fact it is crucial to the play's significance that it comes at the end of Marlowe's career, probably in 1592. Crucial both personally and culturally, for by 1592 Marlowe was a man deeply engaged not only with the Elizabethan theatre, but also with that other employment for a man of letters who did not want to join the church or live as a learned scholar in a great lord's house. He was deeply implicated in the modern foundations of the Elizabethan state – Walsingham's secret service.

Culturally, Marlowe's *Edward II* can be seen as a direct response to his new rival, Shakespeare, whose trilogy on Henry VI had attempted to produce a version of English history which would find ethical and political meaning in the bloody shambles that had produced the Tudor dynasty. It is striking at this point, and in the context of the politics of any future European film, to compare Jarman's *Edward II* with Branagh's *Henry V*.

Henry V is a crucial play for Shakespeare – both the answer to the problems that Marlowe had posed him seven years ago in *Edward II* and the first play in the new Globe Theatre. The power politics with which the bishops open the play is transcended by the national divinity which Henry represents. And the final farewell to an older cultural space is witnessed in the death of Falstaff, standing in for the refusal of Will Kemp (the great clown who had embodied Falstaff) to join the new company.

It can come as a surprise only to those who refuse to understand the links between sexuality and representation that it is in this play that the formal mastering of the female body is accomplished by the naming of Katharine's body in English and her marriage to the English king. It says a lot about the sheer bad taste of Branagh's film that his idea of taking license with the text is to have Falstaff appear in flashback and to rehearse the famous 'Chimes at Midnight' speech (which only makes sense as a conversation between two old men) as a dialogue between Hal and Falstaff.

But this is all of a piece with the cultural nostalgia of Branagh's project (which is ►

◀ exactly captured in the name of the company). The Renaissance Theatre company will now use the cinema to reproduce the Elizabethan stage shorn of all its contradictions. What in Olivier's magnificent film of *Henry V* is the cultural corollary of the last tragic moment of the English state (extinguishing its own Empire in the fight against fascist Germany) becomes in Branagh's tepid offering the farcical analogy of Thatcher's hideous mimicry of Churchill (see Curt Bright's forthcoming article about *Henry V* in *Critical Quarterly*).

Jarman's Renaissance model, it should be clear, has nothing to do with Branagh's. In his film of *The Tempest*, for example, Jarman makes clear how Prospero's reign is one of terror. Not that long ago, it was fashionable to imagine the Elizabethan age as one of social harmony. More recently, and in the wake of the new historicism, political divisions have been understood as contained by cultural power. What both views ignore are the twin foundations of the Elizabethan terror state: torture and espionage. If one wants to think of London at that time, then I always think first of the gates, the walls of the city, on which are placed the bleeding quarters of those who have just been executed. The crucial element in this machinery of terror was Walsingham's secret service. And we can read Ariel in *The Tempest* as an allegory of that secret service, indeed as an allegory of Marlowe himself, forced under pitiless conditions to spy on every corner of the island, to bring to his master Prospero that information which underpins his power (see Curt Bright's article in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Spring 1990).

It is for this reason that Jarman's version of the *Tempest* concentrates on the relationship between Prospero and Ariel, with its barely suppressed sexual undertones. Jarman's homosexuality is what leads him to concentrate on the repression at the heart of the English state, from which all the other repressions follow. The complete containment of sexuality within sanctified heterosexual marriage, the rigorous policing of desire and excess, the focusing on male sexuality and the denial of female sexuality: these are the fundamental themes of *The Tempest*; this is the sexual politics which underpins the birth of capitalism as it appropriates its colonial surplus.

But Jarman clearly understands, even more clearly in his art than in his discourse, how this sexuality is linked to certain traditions of representation. For if the security apparatus is the skeleton of the state, then the new national culture is the flesh. At the heart of this culture is a rigorous divorce between representation and audience. The rowdy Elizabethan theatre, which staged its action among the spectators and which constantly witnessed a dialogue between actors and playgoers, gives way to a neo-classical theatre in which the proscenium arch marks a rigid boundary.

The traditional, and much mocked, reading of *The Tempest* is that it is autobiographical, so that when Prospero at the end says "every third thought shall be my grave", it is Shakespeare's own voice that we should hear as he bids adieu

The avant-garde artist as soap opera star, a St Genet whose *via crucis* is lived through the tabloids

to his audience. In fact, if that traditional autobiographical account is placed within the wider context of theatrical history, then it once again becomes very plausible. The theatre in which Shakespeare started to work at the beginning of the 1590s and in which Marlowe was already the transgressive star was a very different theatre to that to which he bid farewell in 1611. Not only was it more directly popular and addressed a much wider social audience, but it was also one which posed direct political and cultural threats to the state.

By the time he writes *The Tempest*, Shakespeare is writing for a representational space which is much more contained, both aesthetically and socially. That is the crucial point of the masque that Prospero puts on for the lovers to celebrate their wedding. "No tongues! All eyes! Be silent" is his instruction to Ferdinand and Miranda. Prospero reproduces the new relationship to the audience, a relationship where without tongues, reduced to vision, the audience is excluded from the representational space. It is this space, directly filiated to an aristocratic culture, which disinherits the popular traditions on which Shakespeare has drawn so contradictorily. The biographical nature of the farewell comes in the recognition of what has been repressed and disinherited.

It is the fracturing of that representational space which makes Jarman's *Tempest* such a subversive film, for it sets itself not on an island, but in a ruined aristocratic house, an imperial monument. If we understand that this is a house, there is still no way in which we can organise the space that is presented to us. As with the abstract sets of *Edward*, we cannot connect room to room or inside to outside. And, as if to make the point even more explicit, Caliban is played by Jack Birkett, the blind actor.

But if we can understand Jarman's undoing of the space of *The Tempest* – if we can see him using the cinema to undo the rigid distinctions of culture and sexuality which the play so brilliantly performs – we must also admit that, in many ways and whatever the borrowings from the popular culture of the twentieth century, his film remains caught within that exclusive cultural space that it seeks to undermine. Brecht's 'fundamental reproach' to the cinema was that it could never escape that divorce between representation and audience which he termed 'Aristotelian', but which is more properly understood in terms of the Renaissance theatre.

In the aftermath of *The Tempest* (and *Caravaggio* marks no real advance on this problem), one could be left wondering whether this filmic subversion of the relations between representation and audience could ever do more than endlessly interrogate itself. Jarman's dis-

ruption of cinematic space (in terms of costume, sets and articulation of shots and scenes) seems to invite (like so many leftist critiques) a nostalgic Utopia in which the ideal is a carnivalesque union of audience and representation, a return to a moment before any of the divisions of labour on which capitalism constructs itself.

That carnival is, of course, realised for Jarman in his Super-8 films of the 70s, but these remain irredeemably private, films which can only be truly enjoyed (as in their original screenings) by an audience entirely composed of their actors. The steps between *Caravaggio* and *Edward II* are accomplished in *The Last of England* and *The Garden*, where the autobiography is accompanied by a progressive divesting of any private space, a publishing of his very body which is realised in his recent book, *Modern Nature*. In the continuing publication of his life (intensified since he tested positive), Derek has occupied a new cultural space, the avant-garde artist as soap opera star, a St Genet whose *via crucis* is lived through the tabloids.

It is at this point that *Edward II* becomes possible, a most public text, performed throughout the twentieth century, reworked in terms of contemporary sexual politics (the Outrage movement who provide the body of Edward's army), of private loves (Lightborn played by Derek's latest and greatest love), and of Jarman's own previous work (Tilda Swinton and Nigel Terry in front of the camera, Christopher Hobbs, Sandy Powell, Simon Fisher Turner and George Akers behind it). Throughout both production and post-production, Jarman's illness provoked absences which for any other director would seem unthinkable. But Jarman's avowed ambition is to make a film which would be produced entirely by his collaborators.

This dispersal of meaning works equally importantly for the audience. For the vast majority, Jarman is not an anonymous creator, but a figure encountered through a variety of genres and media. One of the most evident examples of this continuous engagement is the published screenplay of the film, which not only contains very private marginal notes, but also a whole series of Outrage slogans. It is in the complexity of the address of the film that it is impossible for the audience to feel itself separate from the work – reaction is not only demanded (as it was always by the most neo-classical of forms), but is, of necessity, displayed in a genuinely new form of carnival.

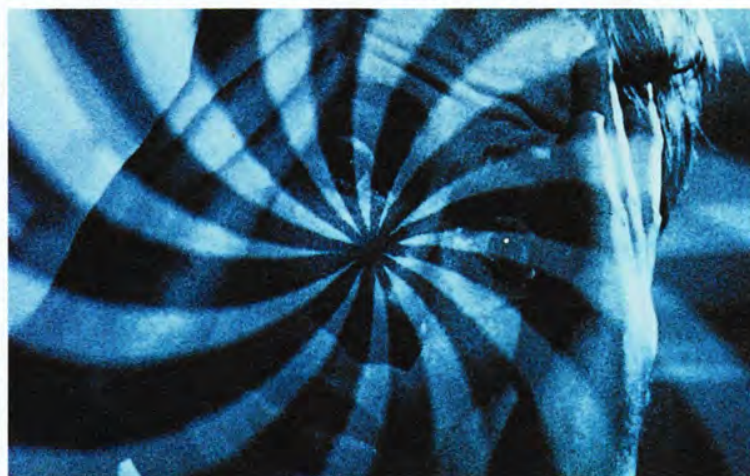
In *Edward II* (as in Olivier's great *Henry V*), the classic text is placed at the service of pressing contemporary concerns. Unlike Olivier's film, however, *Edward II* obviously responds to both public and private needs and calls that very distinction into question. If Branagh's deadly dull effort were the only hope for English, British or European cinema, then we would be justified in saying, and despite the saying, that this is the worst. But thanks be to God or to some stranger deity (probably the black Jewish lesbian that Outrage cast in the role), that has matched Derek with this hour and given us some hope of life. Come death.

Tasteful S tales

**A vortex of ideas
and feelings:
Dr Graves, the object
of panicky fright**

The first thing you see is a caption: "The whole world is dying of panicky fright". Is this to locate us within the film's plot, or is it a general statement about our underlying emotional condition? The first shot is a black and white POV, of police battering down your door. The POV rushes through a nondescript, 50s/80s apartment – utility furniture, shot in harsh black and white – before rushing to a window and dissolving into light.

Jump cut to an 80s news report, all flat US tape colour, about a Long Island boy who has flown away. But the voiceover – "Who was Richie Beacon and where is he now?" – is too



The paranormal, suburbia and sexuality collide in Todd Haynes' 'Poison', a film explicitly engaged with Aids and the bigotry that has grown in its wake. Jon Savage explores how gay cinema has been changed by a new politics, and why, so often, the 50s aesthetic rules

rhetorical for the pawky certainties of most news reporters. Another cut takes you immediately into the title sequence, where another POV travels with a hand around a lush set design. It then unfolds into the more familiar territory of period costume and Genet homage.

Poison is written, directed and co-edited by Todd Haynes, a Brown University art/semiotics graduate. Costing \$255,000, it is his first feature proper; previous credits include *The Suicide* (1978), an examination of contemporary teenage life, and *Superstar: Karen Carpenter Story* (1987), where the story of the Carpenters is told through a dazzling variety of media techniques: vox pops, POVs, voiceovers, captions, simulations and reconstructions.

Superstar is infamous for its central device: the reconstruction of Karen Carpenter's life and death (from anorexia) is told not through actors, but mutated Barbie dolls. As Karen's desperate fight for control over her life unfolds, the narrative reveals the emotions raging beneath the Carpenters' blank facade. The formal shock posed by the dolls' appearance forces you to concentrate on the film's overt message: "As we investigate the story of Karen Carpenter's life and death, we are provided with an extremely graphic picture of the internal experience of contemporary femininity".

As you might expect from Haynes' previous work, *Poison* is a film full of ideas, aphorisms and deliberate perceptual tricks, all spinning around the montage of three separate storylines. As with all good montage, this placing together of disparate elements sets up a vortex of ideas and feelings, not all of which may have been consciously intended by the assembler.

Containing explicit male homosexuality and funded by the NEA, the film fell foul of the American Family Association and was, as usual, boosted by the attendant publicity. This slots it into several easy matrices (America's current moral spasm; homophobia; the public funding of the arts; the symbiosis between censor and censored). Haynes is nothing if not a didactic film-maker, but *Poison* is most interesting, and moving, when seen as a film about perception and limits.

For instance, you could jump right in and say that the first sequence, 'Horror', is obviously 'about' Aids. Shot in the apocalyptic style of 50s science fiction films – with a voiceover that has the luxurious menace of a Vincent Price and tight close-ups on the lights, fans, grilles and vortices that were the staples of noir – the storyline follows a scientist, Thomas Graves, who synthesises a distillation of the sex drive into liquid form. He drinks it by accident and develops a disfiguring, easily contagious disease characterised in the film as leprosy.

"Do I look like the pitiful, decrepit result of some indulgence", Graves hisses, parroting the Moral Right's dismissal (both rhetorical and financial) of gay PWAs. There is much anger here, but as the sequence moves in the last third of the film into pure *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* territory, with a vengeful crowd of 'ordinary people' in pursuit of the outcast, a wider alienation presents itself. As David ►

◀ Wojnarowicz says in his searing account of seropositivity, *Close to the Knives*: "My rage is really about the fact that when I was told that I'd contracted this virus it didn't take me long to realise that I'd contracted a diseased society as well". This is a magical conversion necessary for 'deviants' – that is those described not by themselves but by society as abnormal – to function with any sense of self-worth. This treacherous odyssey is undergone by any of us whose sexual proclivities define us, both from within and without, as homosexuals.

The second storyline, 'Hero', concerns the agents of naming: the media, and in particular current affairs. With its intrusive, normative style – voiceovers, vox pops, name and status captions – 'Hero', like the worst of news journalists, bludgeons the story out of its protagonists; but then the story itself starts to slide. Most documentaries set up contradictions. In 'Hero', wildly varying opinions on the Bad Seed, Richie Beacon – the "perfect child" who "liked controlling people", who had an infectious anal discharge, who killed his father – unfold to the point where the story is 'understood', but then this understanding is cut away by Richie's magical disappearance. Here, the intensity of his mother's awe cuts through the 'objective' framing of the documentary.

The power of naming

Naming is crucial here. As *Poison*'s voiceover says: "A child is born and he is given a name. Suddenly, he recognises his position in the world. For many, this experience, like that of being born, is one of horror". The consequences of naming can be disastrous, and have been at times for the homosexual communities. For instance, once the word 'homosexuality' was coined by the Viennese writer Karoly Maria Benkert in 1869, it quickly came to replace all previous epithets and, as David F. Greenberg points out in *The Construction of Homosexuality*, marks a mid-nineteenth-century change in attitudes, the net effect of which was to "strengthen antihomosexual beliefs". Homosexuality was soon legislated against in the UK by the Labouchère amendment of 1885. And ten years later, this legal naming resulted in the archetypal homosexual scandal of Oscar Wilde.

Wilde's downfall gave a flippant piece of law-making the sanction of legitimised social prejudice: a current in British and American public life that continues today. Like many who have been the subject of scandals after him, Wilde was punished for being 'public' (or 'out') with activities which were regarded as only conductible in private, if at all.

Yet for members of a putative 'deviant minority', what is in the 'public' sphere – the language of law, government, police, market research, media – almost always fails to reflect life as it is lived. The disparity between your individual sense of self-worth and the pejorative estimation placed on you by society is often vast. The psychic consequences are considerable, and still ill-understood: they can be productive, or they can be annihilating.

The disparity between the public and the

Tasteful tales



private is the area in which pop culture and subculture work so effectively – and is why they have both been targeted so heavily by the New Right. As Richard Davenport-Hines states in *Sex, Death and Punishment*: "Gay men and lesbians cause doubt, confirm uncertainty, emphasise differentiation, symbolise contradiction, and confront normality. The vagrant impulse which characterises homosexual desire, the insolent language and camp gestures, and above all doubtfulness are all horribly threatening to authority and authoritarian personalities". In the conversion of values necessary for empowerment, gestures and objects become talismanic. In his crystallisation of sub-cultural theory, Dick Hebdige focuses on Jean Genet's tube of vaseline: "We are intrigued by the most mundane objects – a safety pin, a pointed shoe, a motor cycle – which, nonetheless, like the tube of vaseline, take on a symbolic dimension, becoming a form of stigmata, tokens of a self-imposed exile".

Genet's writing centres on this magical conversion. His is a world of pure insult, a world in which society's values are turned on their head. And this is the subject of *Poison*'s third narrative, 'Homo', an adaptation of *The Thief's Journal*. If Richie Beacon "was always doing these private things", then John Broom, the hero of 'Homo', flourishes in his own, private world within prison: a micro-society in which privacy is well nigh impossible.

Broom is named 'homosexual' on his entry into prison, but this public definition is so far away from his experience that he shrugs it off. His love affair with Jack Bolton is played out within the normative public/private dichotomy. Whatever their 'private' feelings for each

other, when others are present, Broom and Bolton bark at each other and collude in the ritual humiliation of the one out, femme homosexual prisoner. Although set in prison, 'Homo' plays down any sense of public activity. All the encounters are set within enclosed spaces, yet even here, volcanic feelings are barely to be admitted in a private language.

Broom and Bolton have internalised society's hostility, and the raunchiness of the climactic penetration sequence is not enough to dispel their implicit, and self-hating, equation of sex with violence. This is how oppression works: not just overtly, but covertly; in the subconscious as well as in the everyday. As Broom says in voiceover: "All night long I built an imaginary life of which he was the centre. And I always gave that life, which was begun over and over, a violent end".

Back to the 50s

Since the onset of a 'gay cinema', gay skinheads and prison toughs have appeared *ad nauseam* in the films of Fassbinder and Derek Jarman. The relief of seeing confident gay imagery cannot be overemphasised, but the very success of these and other directors has resulted in a new erotic shorthand, and it is in this hand that 'Homo' writes. Admitting a particular kind of sexiness is a good idea, but in the case of 'Homo' it also places a third of this groundbreaking statement about how it feels to be homosexual into more familiar definitions. The attempt here by the *Village Voice* to equate *Poison* and *Salo* is unfortunate; in place of Pasolini's fundamental smash-up, *Poison* seems like an end-of-term paper.

Part of the problem lies in the film's source-

Left: Dr Graves reaches the height of his metamorphosis in 'Horror'.

Below: Richie Beacon faces his mother in a climactic primal scene from 'Hero'.

Bottom: ritual abjection as Bolton is showered with spit by his fellow prisoners in 'Homo'



which have given individual artists, groups, stylists and writers their strength. Yet in the 80s, subcultures have become style and style has become the preserve of the rich or right wing. In this, as Hanif Kureishi has noted in the last issue of *Sight and Sound*, *Blue Velvet* and *Something Wild* portray the deviant roots of pop culture as something dangerous, other. In the terrifying abyss that suddenly opens up beneath the suburban ideal, non-conformists are demoted in order to be excluded.

Poison speaks defiantly from the other side. The paranoid, apocalyptic air of 'Horror' reminds you that consumerism was as much a product of the Cold War as it was a liberation. It also rams home the point that we are now living in the future predicted by those paranoid 50s science fiction films: the vortices that once suggested a near-terminal loss of control are now the staple of pop videos.

Queer planet

"The world is dying of panicky fright" and *Poison* makes all too clear the disastrous impact of Aids and exclusion on the psyches of queer men: horror, loss, pain, paranoia, self-hatred, and an all-pervasive sense of the world closing in. *Poison* concentrates on periods inimical to queer culture – both the 50s and the 80s – and while it makes the point that queer life comes out of these periods, it presents this life against an environment that is uniformly hostile; despite moments of transcendence, it internalises much of the decade which it pastiches. One way through this would be to move the time frame forward. To source that brief period between 1966 and 1982 that was more supportive of homosexuality would be to dispel the internalised message of self-hatred and doom which, in the hands of the New Right, Aids has appeared to reinforce.

Unlike *Salo*, or another film from the 60s widest outreach, *Performance*, *Poison* is a film of limits. In this respect, it is a film of its time. This is not a period when the public discourse of media, law and government is tolerant of wildness and experimentation. After ten years of the assiduously promoted ascendancy of the New Right, the freedoms of the late 60s now have to be regained, and then extended.

Like Jarman's *Queer Edward II* – the book of the film – *Poison* is an explicit engagement with the onset of Aids and the bigotry which has grown in its wake. In this climate, a scene as, let's face it, *tasteful* as the climax of 'Homo' becomes scandalous. "Sex is the only way to infuriate them", wrote another master of insult, Joe Orton. "Much more fucking and they'll be screaming hysterics in no time".

Poison taps into the new, hostile homosexual politics, the very name of which is a conversation: Queer Nation, Queer Planet, Queer Queer Queer. Just like the captions in *Queer Edward II*, which turn around the slogans routinely used to chastise homosexuals – "If you must be heterosexual, please try to be discreet" – *Poison* is a deliberate, stinging slap in the face.

● *Poison* opens in London, Edinburgh and Brighton on 11 October

ing of 50s imagery; although both 'Homo' and 'Hero' source different periods (an idealised 40s; a flat 80s), it is 'Horror' that provides the dominant look. *Poison* uses the blurred 50s/80s aesthetic that in the hands of directors like David Lynch has defined pop post-modernism during the last five years. But it then transgresses it: unlike Lynch, Haynes has a sharp sense of progressive politics and the interaction between his narratives throws up fundamental questions about our psychic state.

It has been the project of the New Right of the 80s in both the US and the UK to erase the wildness and progressivism of the 60s and restate the 50s ideal of suburban, materialistic conformity. Pop culture has played its part in

this: beginning with punk/new wave fashions, which re-emphasised the 50s shape, that decade's style has proved dominant. Films like Lynch's *Blue Velvet* and Demme's *Something Wild* define this blur of 80s values with the stylistic trappings of the 50s. Yet the return of the decade in which pop culture was young and vigorous is a mockery: the 50s flawed, but powerful, ideal of democratic consumption has been reneged upon; now it is enough, as Barbara Ehrenreich has pointed out, for fewer to consume more.

The result is the exclusion of those 'minorities' for whom pop culture brought visibility and power. It is impossible to speak about pop culture without the minority subcultures

What is the relation between television and cultural rights? What ought broadcasters to be doing? Graham Murdock explains

The current flurry of speculation over the future of ITV has been dominated by broadcasters and investment analysts. Their interests are pragmatic: who will win the franchise auction? Will the winners have the cash to fulfil their promises? What will the regulators do if they don't?

These questions seem a long way from the issues raised by Mr Major's misnamed Citizen's Charter, and even further from the debate about the future of British democracy initiated by Charter 88. But to see the connection we only need change the question and ask what national broadcasting should be trying to do.

So far, the industry has not come up with an adequate answer. As David Elstein, director of programming at Thames Television, forcefully reminded us in his keynote address at this year's Edinburgh Television Festival, broadcasters have "collectively failed to offer a coherent statement of the social purpose of broadcasting", leaving the hollow rhetorics of competition and consumer choice to fill the vacuum. A principled alternative *must* begin with the rights of citizenship, defined in their broadest sense as the right to participate fully in the life of society and help to shape its future. Put like this, it is clear that this general right must be underwritten by comprehensive information and cultural rights.

In their narrow sense, information rights entail knowing what your rights are and how to press effectively for their delivery. More broadly, they assume a right to know what is happening, what is being done about it and what options are open, together with the right to contribute to debates about future action.

Cultural rights are more difficult. As originally defined, they amounted to rights of access to the culture deemed by a dominant elite to be fit for popular consumption, at whose centre lay a set of artistic works that claimed to define the qualities of 'Englishness'. But this highly selective definition silenced

other voices and dissolved the identities they spoke for in the imagined unity of the nation. Difference was subordinated to deference.

The conception of the 'national culture' has been under siege for some time, as the voices of class, locality, gender and ethnicity have pressed for representation. The result is a continuing struggle over who has the right to speak about whose lives, who participates in public argument and who is excluded. It is now clear that we must see cultural rights as centred on the right to have one's experiences and beliefs fairly and comprehensively represented and to be able to contribute to the creation and renewal of those representations. This means replacing the celebration of 'national culture' with a commitment to exploring the unities and differences within national experience.

Since National broadcasting is at the heart of the battle to extend both information rights and rights of cultural representation, the basic requirements of a broadcasting system capable of deepening democracy by extending the cultural and information rights of citizenship are worth outlining.

First, it must provide people with the full range of information they need to make considered personal and political judgments and to pursue their rights effectively. In particular, it must provide comprehensive and disinterested information on the activities of the public and commercial agencies which have significant power over people's lives. This is the minimum requirement for active citizenship.

Second, it must engage with the greatest possible range of contemporary experience, both personal and collective, and interrogate the historical roots of present conditions. It must attack stereotypes and encourage viewers to make imaginative leaps into the world of the 'other'. Recognising communalities while respecting differences is a basic precondition for democratic life in a complex society.

Third, it must offer the broadest possible range of viewpoints on the experiences it represents and the greatest possible array of arguments and contexts within which they can be interpreted and evaluated. It must take a leading role in interrogating the claims of competing positions and in managing the often abrasive relations between languages of identity rooted in specific communities of interest and the negotiated conception of the public good. And finally, it must allow these viewpoints to be expressed through the widest possible range

of programme forms and take positive steps to encourage innovation and experiment in presentation and visual style.

A public broadcasting system committed to these aims must be relatively independent of both corporate promotion and state and government. It must be able to provide a public space in which no single voice is allowed undue prominence and must negotiate difference within a schedule which incorporates minority views and alternative positions into the heart of primetime programming. Confining these experiences to the edges of the schedule simply confirms their marginal status and so discourages that imaginative traffic across the boundaries which can only happen if others' views are taken as having equal value.

In addition, the entire range of programming must be available to every citizen, regardless of where they live or how much money they have. Subscription systems make access to cultural and information resources conditional on ability to pay, creating a substantial strata of people who are permanently locked out of the new cultural and information marketplaces – an exclusion that represents a reduction in their rights as citizens. Because a television set is the one major consumer durable that almost every household has, public broadcasting is central to the safeguarding of these rights.

The growth of independent production over the last ten years has been greeted as a significant step in the realisation of some of these aims, on the grounds that it has broadened the range of people making programmes, encouraged experiments with new forms of presentation, and established more responsive links between producers and their publics. Channel 4 at its best has been instrumental in securing these gains, but there is no guarantee that they will be upheld. A move towards consolidation within the independent sector has been apparent for some time. This looks set to continue, with the result that a core of a dozen or so companies will be left making a variety of programming for Channel 4, ITV, BBC and Channel 5, with an outer ring of smaller concerns producing for specialised niches.

Whether or not the independent sector will sustain a more diverse programme system will depend on the commissioning philosophies of the three major broadcasting networks and the

Whose television is it anyway?

ability of new entrants to gain a foothold. If independents are encouraged to continue to explore the politics of difference and if public finance is made available to new groupings to do so, the prospects are good. But if independents are seen simply as a way of delivering more of the same, more cheaply, the chances of increased diversity are slim. The bid documents produced by the major challengers for the ITV franchises do not make encouraging reading. Adaptations of *Jane Eyre* (White Rose), a drama series promising "the Rumpole of the 1990s" (Meridian), or a twice-weekly serial about the fortunes of two extended families set in a large transport company (Carlton) may pass the ITC 'quality' hurdle, but do not look set to extend diversity. And even these modest proposals may have to be revised downwards if the money isn't there.

The bidding system is designed to maximise the amount of money that the new ITV companies return to the government. Each has to pay a fixed percentage of its income plus the cash bid each year, so that something like a quarter of the system's revenue could go straight back to the Treasury. Inevitably, this is money taken out of production budgets, with the result that programmes which combine high costs with the risk of falling foul of political and moral interest groups – namely investigative documentaries and dramas dealing with contentious issues – will be particularly vulnerable.

It is not just a question of how much money is available, however, but of who is supplying it and on what terms. Commercial television packages viewers for sale to advertisers and measures audiences according to their potential as consumers. This has always given advertisers considerable indirect influence on the types of programmes that get made and their position in the schedule. Until recently, this power has been checked by a strong set of public service requirements and a clear separation between advertising and programme production. Channel 4 has had the additional protection of not dealing directly with advertisers.

But these Chinese Walls are coming down. The new Broadcasting Act waters down the public service requirements for ITV companies and insists that Channel 4 sell its own advertising space. Nor is it simply a question of commercial influence over programme plans and scheduling. One of the ITC's first acts was to relax the rules governing programme sponsorship, so opening the way for advertisers' direct intervention in the programme-making process. This is the thin end of a wedge that

includes product placement, barter arrangements and the rise of advertising agencies as programme suppliers. Holding the line against these pressures will be one of the key regulatory issues of the 90s.

Beyond this, the structure of the ITV system itself poses problems. When it was first launched, the federal arrangement of regionally based companies provided a long overdue counter to the metropolitan bias of the BBC. But the constitution of the franchise regions was always problematic, since their boundaries were shaped not by cultural integrity, but by engineering convenience. By failing to change the franchise boundaries yet making the provision of regional programming a statutory duty, the new regulatory regime has forced bidders to put forward elaborate plans for split regions and local opt-outs, leaving less space to address ethnic, sexual and other differences that escape the confines of place. Exploring these dimensions has been central to Channel 4's remit, but whether it will be able to sustain its commitment after 1993, when it has to sell its own advertising space, remains to be seen.

A disinterested observer would have to be pessimistic. Yet the forces in play are not irreversible and four simple policy initiatives would make a substantial difference. First, more money should be made available for programme-making. Most should be retained by the ITV companies, but some should go to augmenting Channel 4's basic finances and some to supporting new independent production and workshop arrangements. Second, a strong set of public service requirements should be reintroduced to ensure that most of this money is spent in pursuit of diversity. Third, an embargo must be placed on advertisers' ability to intervene in programme-making. And fourth, broadcasters' opportunity to interrogate state activities should be strengthened by revisions to the Official Secrets legislation and the introduction of a comprehensive freedom of information act. The available space for open debate should be further enlarged by the withdrawal of the ban on interviews with named organisations and the abolition of the Broadcasting Standards Council.

Yet even with these changes, the ITV system's capacity to extend information and cultural rights will remain limited by its underlying economic logic. This makes the battle for the future of the BBC of crucial importance. The debate will accelerate sharply as the 1996 dead-

line for the renewal of the Charter approaches; the issues at stake are financial, institutional and philosophical. A secure and adequate level of public finance is essential to support a diverse production system and guarantee continued universal access, though it is not clear that the present licence system is the best means of achieving this. The case for direct funding needs to be looked at, in return for which the BBC must agree to refuse all calls to introduce spot advertising, extend sponsorship or develop general subscription services.

The second issue concerns control and accountability. Here it is clear that the arrangements for appointing members to the Board of Governors need to be rethought, together with a reconsideration of the role of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission and of programmes providing a right of reply. The case for a Select Parliamentary Committee on broadcasting, which could scrutinise interventions by state and government and provide a forum for debate merits serious discussion.

But the most important battle is not about how the BBC is organised, but what it is for. The basic choice is between a view of the organisation as a central guarantor of culture and information rights, addressing its viewers as citizens of a complex democracy, or as a quasi-commercial entity, relating to its audiences as customers and honorary shareholders.

Both would require a radical overhaul of current practices. In order to provide adequate resources for citizenship, the BBC needs to uncouple the notion of 'public culture' from the historical conception of 'national culture' and to see the programme system as an open space where the widest possible range of experiences, viewpoints and frameworks of understanding can be represented and explored. Extending the philosophical project pioneered by Channel 4, it should aim to take 50 per cent of its output from independent producers and to play a leading role in ensuring plurality of provision by supporting smaller concerns and new entrants. At the same time, a strong core of in-house production needs to be retained, capable of underwriting innovation and withstanding political and corporate pressure.

The clarification and implementation of these aims is absolutely necessary if the BBC is to justify its privileged claim on public money and fulfil its potential as central resource for contemporary citizenship. Without it, information and cultural rights face a bleak future in a television marketplace increasingly dominated by commercial rationales.



On the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Orson Welles' 'Citizen Kane' in Britain, Andrew Sarris, a long-time contributor to the 'Kane' debate, asks if the film deserves its glorious reputation



Kane

For and against

Citizen Kane erupted on to the screen, at least as a long-lived figure of speech, on 1 May 1941 at New York's Palace Theater. The film was originally to be premiered at the more prestigious and profitable Radio City Music Hall, but the booking was rejected – presumably because of the controversy surrounding the film's allegedly libellous treatment of William Randolph Hearst and his mistress, Marion Davies. Although Orson Welles always insisted that Charles Foster Kane was a composite of several tycoons, Barbara Leaming's authorised biography of Welles contains the startling information that: "Somehow, before making the movie, Orson had found out the secret name that Hearst used to refer to Marion Davies' genitalia: Rosebud". So much for the arcane analysis of this most tantalising of cinematic symbols.

After fifty years of relentless re-evaluation, whether or not *Citizen Kane* is all that it is cracked up to be remains an open question. There are many people who have never even seen the movie – we're not talking here about *Gone With the Wind* or *It's a Wonderful Life* or *The Wizard of Oz*. We are talking instead of a dark, shadowy slab of celluloid that Jorge Luis Borges once described as that "centreless labyrinth"

Staging a self: is there anyone behind the succession of poses Orson Welles strikes as Charles Foster Kane, left and above?

mentioned in Chesterton's *The Head of Caesar*.

Even when first released, *Citizen Kane* was never viewed as popular, feel-good entertainment and the various conspiracy theories that seek to explain its bombing at the box office probably rely too heavily on a right-wing publisher's wrath. It was certainly no fault of Hearst's that the movie was a commercial flop in Britain, where Hearst had as little influence as Lord Beaverbrook in the US. Here, things were so bad that C.L. Lejeune of the *Observer* claimed British cinema owners frightened their children to sleep with stories of what happened (or rather, didn't happen) at the ticket counters when they played *Citizen Kane*.

The three most perceptive American film critics of the early 40s – James Agee, Manny Farber and Otis Ferguson – were also less than enchanted by the movie and by Welles' work in general. Suspicion of his eccentric compositions, shock editing and dizzying camera movements led to accusations that he was a faker, a charlatan, or, worst of all, an ivory-tower exhibitionist who failed to address the problems of the 'common people'.

Neither audiences nor critics was comfortable with Welles' 'cinematic' innovations borrowed from his own theatrical expressionism and experimentation. Every bit of portentous lighting and shadowing in *Kane* was first ►

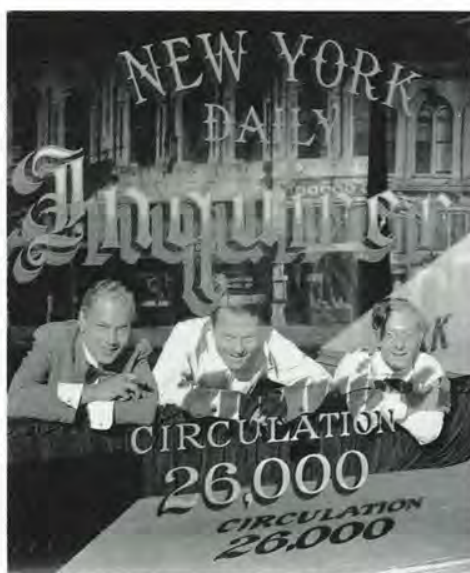
◀ manifested in the Wellesian theatre of the late 30s. What did make *Kane* seem fresh in 1941 was its casting of theatre and radio people – Joseph Cotten, Everett Sloane, George Coulouris, Dorothy Comingore, Ray Collins, Ruth Warrick, Agnes Moorehead, William Alland, Erskine Sandford, Paul Stewart, *et al* – who had never before been seen on the screen. Welles himself was the biggest histrionic explosion on the movie screen, but to this day people differ on whether as a performer he was all that good or revelatory, or all that bad and hammy.

The film met with a warmer reception in France. For film-makers and critics such as François Truffaut and his colleagues at *Cahiers du cinéma*, the destiny of Charles Foster Kane was merged with that of Welles himself in an extreme expression of auteurism. For French critics, who were not able to see *Citizen Kane* until after the end of the German occupation in 1945, Welles' spectacular screen debut was seen in the context of his subsequent precipitous decline and fall. And when he turned up in Europe with the harried demeanour of a political exile, he was greeted as another Stroheim, another Chaplin, another Keaton – a genius to be cherished. *Kane* thus became inseparable from Welles and his ordeal at the hands of the American philistines.

Burnt-out case

Most film historians and cineastes continue to regard *Kane* as the artistic creation of Welles. The only serious challenge to this assumption was mounted by the anti-auteurist Pauline Kael in the *New Yorker* in 1970, where she laid most of the credit for the film at the door of screenplay-writer Herman J. Mankiewicz. Predictably, Kael marshalled all the evidence she could to divorce the direction of *Citizen Kane* from its ultimate authorship, and she was supported in her arguments by former associates of Welles, most notably, John Houseman. Counter-arguments were published by Peter Bogdanovich, this critic, and several technical collaborators on the production. In the end, however, Kael succeeded only in adding another layer of mythology to Welles as the man who 'stole' *Citizen Kane* from Mankiewicz.

In his memoirs, *Starting Out in the Thirties*, Alfred Kazin has written about Welles as a cultural hero for New York's left-leaning intelligentsia. Unfortunately, we must rely on aging memories and still photographs for clues to the magic of Welles in an anti-fascist *Julius Caesar*, a Haitian voodoo *Macbeth* performed in the heart of Harlem, and a comparatively conventional agitprop production of Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*. Welles was hardly an agitprop artist himself, but his political sympathies and associations might well have had him black-listed as a red in the 50s – if the studio moguls had not virtually exiled him beforehand for allegedly being in the red. Yet though the words 'communist' and 'fascist' are bravely uttered on a 1941 American screen by characters in *Kane*, Welles alternates the two terms as epithets hurled at Kane more to confound his audience than to convert it. In the coming



Seeing through a glass darkly: Joseph Cotten, Orson Welles and Everett Sloane

attraction footage for the movie, produced by Welles himself, it is clear that he was trying to sell ambiguity to the moviegoing public, and that the public wasn't buying.

Curiously, *Kane* can be enjoyed for many of the right reasons, and admired for many of the wrong ones. It is certainly worthy of revival and reconsideration, but it hardly stands alone, even among the directorial efforts of Orson Welles. (I personally prefer *The Magnificent Ambersons*.) To believe that *Citizen Kane* is a great American film in a morass of mediocre Hollywood movies is to misunderstand its transparent movieness, from its Xanadu castle out of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to its menagerie out of *King Kong*, to its mirrored reflections out of old German *Doppelgänger* spectacles. Then there are the stylistic borrowings from John Ford and Fritz Lang, the Slavko Vorkapich newspaper headline montages and the supposedly revolutionary flashback structure which is in fact profoundly derivative of the 'narratage' of Preston Sturges in William K. Howard's tycoon saga *Power and the Glory* (1933) or of Dalton Trumbo's fetishistic-symbolic variant in Garson Kanin's *A Man to Remember* (1938). Yet though *Citizen Kane* is not nearly as 'original' as some of the critical encomiums would indicate, its influence on subsequent cinema is still to be seen in the works of Stanley Kubrick, the Coen brothers and many other film-makers on all five continents.

Private eye

No single movie can sustain the enormous cultural burden imposed upon *Citizen Kane*. On its most superficial, and most entertaining, level, it can be described as a mystery story with two eternally fashionable themes: the debasement of the private personality of the public figure through the scandal-seeking media, and the allegedly crushing weight on the soul of material possessions, which, in Hollywood terms, is known as having your cake and spitting it out, too. Taken together, these themes enable the audience to feel both pity and moral superiority towards the bitter spectacle of great

fame and wealth ending in futile nostalgia, loneliness, and death.

Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles in an old-age make-up to end all old-age make-up) dies in a cartoonishly gothic castle left over from a Disney drawing board on the RKO back lot with a close-up of his lips intoning his last word: "Rosebud". The mystery of who or what this means will be revealed in such a perishable way that the viewer will always know and feel something about Charles Foster Kane that none of the other characters in his life can ever suspect. The 'detective' who seeks to solve the mystery is a reporter for a news service which produces *March of Time*-like newsreels. He is always photographed obliquely and obscurely, as if he were a faceless surrogate for the audience, literally its private eye. The 'suspects' are some of the persons and objects Kane encountered in his cluttered existence.

'Rosebud' is a pretext by which the past history of Charles Foster Kane is penetrated by the reporter-detective and the omniscient camera of Gregg Toland. Time is thrown back and brought forward in the four major movements of the film: the flashback recollections of Kane's banker-guardian, Mr Thatcher (George Coulouris); his business manager, Bernstein (Everett Sloane, in a slightly raucous performance co-scenarist Herman J. Mankiewicz complained was too Jewish); his best friend, Jed Leland (Joseph Cotten); and his second wife, Susan Alexander (Dorothy Comingore in a shrill, misogynous caricature of Marion Davies). Each major flashback begins at a later point in time than its predecessor, but each flashback overlaps with at least one of the others so that the same event or period is seen from two or three points of view.

There is a fifth flashback – a newsreel of Kane's public career – which establishes his identity for the first time in the film. There is no establishing-shot transition between the opening scene of Kane dying in bleak grandeur and the noisily startling appearance of the unframed newsreel, making this the film's first shock effect. By isolating the newsreel from the main body of the film, Welles provides historical and biographical information, while at the same time dismissing it as a major factor in the overriding Freudian subtext of a poor little rich boy who never managed to recover from the loss of his mother.

The newsreel fades out; a sudden establishing shot picks up a darkened projection room. The first of the many disembodied voices in the film calls out from the darkness, and the shadow plot of *Citizen Kane* begins. A group of cynical newsmen discuss ways of pepping up the newsreel and the reporter is dispatched to find the secret of 'Rosebud'. The semi-colloquial dialogue is driven with line-stepping-on-line persistence from every direction. This mannered 'spontaneity' of line-readings had been done before, but never so relentlessly. The same is true of Toland's celebrated deep focus.

The reporter begins his search and the major movements of *Citizen Kane* begin. Through a hard, wide-angle lens, the reporter enters a cav-

Entering the labyrinth

I remember driving up to RKO. There was all these stucco buildings, through archways, and walking into this magical land, and it was magical, I must say, people walking around just like you'd see today, with all different costumes and excitement, and we were excited. We had a beautiful suite of offices. I don't think any of us realised what an impact we were making on the place, because we were a bunch of twenty-two, twenty-three-year-old kids really. And we had just moved in and taken over the studio, and all these people were looking around, wondering who the hell we were and what did we think we were going to be doing.

William Alland, one of the players in 'Citizen Kane'

I had a little corner all to myself and in that place I had clay, and I had my tools and everything else. And I would spend as much as I could creatively because it was important. Orson saw me playing with noses and ears and things like that and he wanted to know if I could completely change his face. I said, "Sure". So he says, "You're absolutely sure?" I said, "I'm absolutely sure". "So, what do you have to do first?", he said. And I said, "I have to take an impression of your head... the whole head". He liked the idea, and when we got the materials, he came in and he sat down in the chair, comfortably, and I covered him up, everything cooking.

Maurice Seiderman, make-up artist

The picture was about William Randolph Hearst and two or three other newspaper barons. But the picture was also about Orson and a great deal of stuff in that picture was taken not only from Hearst's life but from Orson's childhood, from Orson's life, and certain characteristics of Kane were characteristics of Orson rather than of William Randolph Hearst. I mean, the great scene where he demolishes her dressing room was definitely inspired by the great final scene of separation between Orson and me when he threw four flaming dishwarmers at me. The same kind of insane destruction at the loss of something that he really felt very strongly about, was used there, and that was true in many instances.

John Houseman, co-founder of the Mercury Theatre

It was a big risk to take, Orson and the Mercury Players. And we were working on *Citizen Kane* and he wouldn't let us see the picture as it was progressing. He would, invite us over but he would keep us outside the screening room and do tricks and stuff to amuse us, and that didn't sit very well with Mr Schaefer, he didn't like that at all. Mr Schaefer was a very good executive, he was the president of the company at that time. He had come from Paramount, and he knew his business, and it was a shame that Orson did this monkey business with him, very disillusioning to somebody who really wanted to build up a studio and do something with it.

Reginald Armour, executive assistant to George Schaefer

One day in the office they said there's a man called Toland waiting to see you. And he was, of course, the leading cameraman and he said, "I want to make you a picture". And I said, "well that's wonderful. Why? I don't know anything about movies". And he said, "that's why I want to do it. If you're left alone as much as possible we're gonna have a movie that looks different. I'm tired of working with people who know too much about it". We came to a moment in the first week of shooting... no, the second week, where I suddenly was told by somebody that it was not the job of the director to do all the lighting. Up to then I'd been doing all the lighting with Toland behind me balancing and all but saying don't tell anybody, you see. Then I had to go and apologise to him and everything. Then another awful moment came when I didn't understand directions. And that was because I had learned how to make movies by running *Stagecoach* every night for a month... if you

will look at *Stagecoach* you will see that the Indians attack left to right and then they attack right to left and so on. In other words, there's no direction followed. Every rule is broken in the picture. And I sat and watched it forty-five times. So of course when I was suddenly told in an over shoulder shot that I had to look camera left instead of camera right I said no, because I was standing here... So we closed the picture down. And at about two in the afternoon I went back to my house and Toland showed me how that worked. And I said, "well there's a lot of stuff here I don't know", and he said, "there's nothing I can't teach you in three hours". And that's when I said that... which has been taken as a very pompous statement, that I learned everything in three hours. It was Toland's idea that anybody can learn it in three hours and that he taught it to me in three hours. Everything else is if you're any good or not.

...I wanted to have nobody in the film you'd ever seen before. I thought that'd be a great thing in a movie... because those were the days when every studio made 120 pictures a year and those faces were all so well known. Because I believed that a great deal of the success of foreign language films came from the fact that the faces were new to the American public. I've since decided that it also came from the fact that the movies were good. But I was an arrogant bastard then and I thought a lot of it came from just new faces. And I liked my people and we got along well together and we'd been in the theatre and radio together, so why not in films.

Orson Welles

The Welles quotations are taken from the BBC Arena 'The Orson Welles Story'; other quotations are from BBC's 'The RKO Story'

ernous museum; a dingy nightclub; a solidly upholstered office in which Bernstein tells an ineffably touching story of a girl he once saw on the Staten Island Ferry; a drab hospital ward in which Kane's best friend has become his most implacable foe; and, finally, the sombre mansion of Charles Foster Kane, where he and Susan Alexander play out the joyless charade of their grotesque marriage.

The first Mrs Kane is disposed of maritally in a scene of artful flash pans (of the Kane breakfast table) hailed by Milos Forman recently as his first youthful moviegoing experience in Czechoslovakia that demonstrated to him what a director did. The mystery of 'Rosebud' is finally solved in an incendiary *coup de cinéma*.

Transfiguration

My feeling of discovery and abiding attachment to the idea of 'Rosebud' is because I see it not only as the missing piece of a jigsaw, but also as the beating heart of the movie. It is 'Rosebud' that structures *Citizen Kane* as a private-eye investigation of a citizen in the public eye, and thus brings us much closer to *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Big Sleep* and the burning R's on the pillowcases of *Rebecca*.

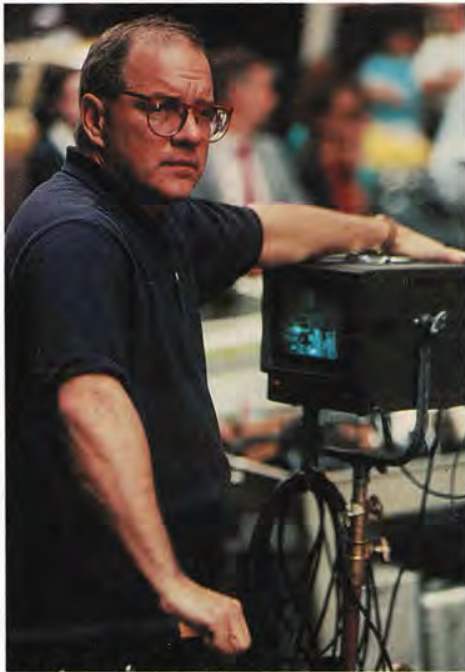
The problem with defending 'Rosebud' as a narrative device is that its very vividness makes it a running gag in our satirically oriented culture. How can we take 'Rosebud' seriously, Pauline Kael complains, after Snoopy in the comic strip *Peanuts* has called Lucy's sled 'Rosebud'? The same way, I suppose, that we can still take *Potemkin* seriously after Woody Allen has sent a baby carriage rolling down the steps of a Latin-American palace in *Bananas*. Both Snoopy and Woody are paying homage to bits of film language transformed by the magical contexts of their medium into poetic metaphors. But where Eisenstein's baby carriage moves from prop to agitprop as it becomes an archetypal conveyance of revolutionary fervour, 'Rosebud' reverberates with familial echoes as it passes through the snows of childhood into the fire, ashes and smoke of death.

Indeed, the burning of 'Rosebud' in Xanadu's furnace represents the only instance in which the soul of Kane can be seen subjectively by the audience. It is as if his mind and memory were being cremated before our eyes and we are both helpless to intervene and incompetent to judge. It is an image of transfiguration that transforms us through the flames into concerned witnesses of a life ending on a note of rueful regret.

I love to teach *Citizen Kane*. It is chock full of self-explanatory excerpts. Otherwise, I like to think of *Citizen Kane* simply as one of the many good movies turned out in Hollywood in the past seventy-five years. Even in 1941 there were several movies on the same level of excellence, and though there was something special about Welles' film, it was neither the beginning of anything, nor the end of anything, but more a glorious middle. The moment someone tells me that *Citizen Kane* is the only good American film, I immediately realise they do not fully understand even *Citizen Kane* itself.



Pleasure dome with caves of ice: Kane's second wife in Xanadu



Schrader: returning to old preoccupations

Blood on the tracks

On location in New York, Kevin Jackson watches as director Paul Schrader struggles to make his new film 'Light Sleeper' – and to cope with Bob Dylan

After four or five hours of standing around in the harsh July sunlight up on 131st Street, everyone on the location has learned how to reel off a catechism. It runs like this: local resident walks or drives past the Golden Lock Social Club on Lennox Avenue, sees all the trailers and equipment surrounding the place, and asks: "You making a movie?" "That's right". "What's it called?" "Light Sleeper". "Light Sleeper? Who's in it?" "Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon". (No one ever wants to know the name of the director, but even if Paul Schrader were touchy enough to care, he's much too preoccupied right now.) Pause. "What's it about?" "It's about a drug dealer..." Curiosity satisfied, the enquirer moves on.

The routine is repeated almost without variation countless times throughout the day, until at one point a young man pulls over, leans out of his car window and shouts: "Yo... What does this production primarily concern?" We all yell back, "A drug dealer", as usual. But *Light Sleeper's* cinematographer, Ed Lachman, is so amused by the incongruous seminar-room phrasing that he keeps repeating it to himself and chuckling: "What does this production primarily concern?..."

It is, of course, a good question. When the time eventually comes for a break, Lachman offers a more ruminative answer: "I've always seen it as a film about predestination". Linda Reisman, *Light Sleeper's* producer, takes a similar tone: "A lot of people who read the script thought that the characters were too dark, but we saw it as a film about redemption".

Theological abstractions apart, perhaps the most thought-provoking response is that *Light Sleeper* is a sequel to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, which Schrader also scripted. Not a literal sequel, since Schrader has always said that he will never yield to the commercial temptation of writing *Taxi Driver II: Travis Strikes Back*, but more a spiritual sequel, returning to the same streets and preoccupations. Taking a fifteen minute break in his trailer while Lachman supervises the set-up on which they have agreed, Schrader tries to clarify the point. "This film is like the third instalment of a certain character, a voyeur, a drifter. When he was in his twenties he was very hostile and paranoid and was a cab driver. Then in his thirties he was very narcissistic and self-involved and he was a gigolo. And now he's forty, he's... anxious. He hasn't made anything of his life, he doesn't know what will become of his life, and he's a drug delivery boy".

Echoes from Schrader's scripts for both *Taxi Driver* and *American Gigolo* sound throughout the *Light Sleeper* screenplay, though points of contact with the former are more striking. While Schrader's new hero, John LeTour, is an altogether more polite creation than *Taxi Driver's* Travis Bickle, he shares several of the enraged hero's burdens – for instance, insomnia, a nightly void which both men try to stare down with the help of a journal. As Schrader's description suggests, *Light Sleeper* is a film about confronting a mid-life crisis. And while there is just as great a distance between the established

director and John LeTour as there was between the aspiring screenwriter and Travis Bickle, it is hard not to sense elements of displaced autobiography in both works.

There was certainly a comparable urgency in their writing. Schrader once said that the screenplay for *Taxi Driver* "jumped out of my head like an animal" and was finished in ten days. Allowing for different circumstances – "I couldn't just work round the clock this time, I had to keep family hours" – *Light Sleeper* was written even more rapidly, in just two weeks. "It all came pretty much as a piece. I had been looking over the last few years for a personal, original piece to write and it just hadn't been coming, so I had stopped looking. And then some time last September I had a dream about this character, who was somebody I had known years before. I woke up at 4am and realised that he wanted me to write about him. By 6am I was wide awake and knew that I was going to do it".

Polished by several drafts, the script reads as the most personal and best original piece Schrader has written for years. Compellingly direct as regards its main plot but with plenty of satisfyingly oblique and complex by-ways, even a cursory glance through its pages reveals a wealth of references – unobtrusive at first but cumulatively unsettling – to occultist paraphernalia and teachers: tarot cards, Madame Blavatsky, numerology, Jeanne Dixon. Schrader says he was struck by similarities between the way the drug dealers he met while he was researching the piece talked about luck and the way his old Calvinist teachers used to speak of grace... hence, in part, Lachman's comment about "predestination".

Brusquely summarised, *Light Sleeper* follows several increasingly tense days in the life of LeTour, cocaine supplier to the New York gentry. The film begins during a hot Labour Day weekend when the streets are overflowing with trash because of a sanitation strike. Le Tour's employer, Ann (Susan Sarandon) is planning to go legitimate with a cosmetics business, putting him in a dismal position, since he has no savings, no skills, no calling. Worse still, he finds that the police are becoming much too interested in him and his colleagues after a rich young girl is found dead with a large quantity of high-calibre coke on her body. He goes to a psychic (played by Mary Beth Hurt, Schrader's wife) who tells him that she sees death hovering in his vicinity. Fearing that he is about to be made the victim of a frame-up, he sets off into Harlem, to a dealers' hang-out called Jump-Offs where he can buy a gun.

Which is why the crew and all the rest of us are up here on 131st Street on this uncomfortably sultry Monday, with eight days of a punishingly compressed forty day schedule left to go (a movie of this scale would usually have sixty days or more). Since *Light Sleeper* is being filmed almost entirely on location, moving to a different place just about every day, the ►

Restless nights: Willem Dafoe as John LeTour, the cocaine-selling supplier to New York's gentry confronting a mid-life crisis



◀ first few hours of the mornings have tended to go slowly and it has been unusual to have much footage shot before lunch. Now, though, after several hours of work, it is almost time for the first big tracking shot of scene 72, in which the camera will hover behind Dafoe's shoulder as he walks into the hostile territory of Jump-Offs and checks out the regulars.

Before we arrived, the Golden Lock was already a bit of an eyesore; by lunchtime it is a disgrace. Inside, the long bar mirror has been spray-painted with a rough mural suggesting a naive artist's version of *The Temptation of St Anthony*. The tables have been strewn with half-eaten pizzas, cigarette butts and abandoned drinks and a smoke machine fills the room with a mephitic haze. Lachman, still wearing his trademark black anorak, puts the final touches to his lighting set-up.

Lachman's scheme for the day has been prompted by the fact that the Golden Lock has an unusual mid-room skylight, which he has made the key feature of his plot. "I'm always interested in what makes a location unique", he explains, "and then try to explore those possibilities I might not have thought of in advance. The viewer is not going to see the skylight, and I don't know whether people will understand what is happening, but you just have to be true to what you do..."

Dafoe comes on set and the next half-hour is taken up with rehearsing for a take of that travelling shot which won't accidentally reveal the tracks in his way. It's a tricky stunt, requiring a lot of choreography, since the tracks run the full length of the bar and Dafoe has to step carefully between them while seeming with the upper half of his body to be drifting with calculated nonchalance towards his contact, Manuel. This demands more physical than emotional skill – there's obviously a limit to the amount of acting Dafoe can do with the back of his head – but he is unfussily co-operative when the camera operator keeps calling "Cut!" because a section of the track has become visible. After half an hour or so of rehearsals, the first takes of the day are swiftly done.

Next come the close-ups of LeTour's haggling with Manuel, and some reverse shots. When these are completed to Schrader's satisfaction, everyone goes out on to the street to film scenes 70 (LeTour's taxi pulls up) and 71 (LeTour bribes his way in with a gram of product) in the late afternoon light specified by the screenplay. By the time Lachman has lit the back room of Jump-Offs for scene 73 (LeTour buys a .38 Detective Special), which should take three set-ups requiring about an hour each, it is already dark outside and it looks as if the working day will be running past its twelve hour limit and into overtime. Schrader and Lachman confer, then come up with a way of shooting scene 73 in a single, fluid shot that follows LeTour and the dealers into the room, sees them exchange the gun, and then swings round to follow them out again. The assistant director calls "Action" and they go for the shot.

Schrader watches through a small black and white monitor, listens on headphones; it looks

and sounds all right. The take begins again, then again, four, five, six times, until Schrader announces that we can wrap up for the day. He and Lachman are visibly elated: not only did the shot work, but it looked better than the original three set-ups they had planned. "If a shot like that can contain all the action without breaking, then it's better to keep it that way, because it's visually and psychologically much stronger to maintain a single point of view", Lachman comments.

Driving back downtown to watch the rushes from Friday night's filming, Schrader seems more cheerful and relaxed than he has all day. But he is still deeply concerned about a major problem with the music that has blown up over the weekend. The screenplay of *Light Sleeper* specifies that virtually every scene is underscored, bridged, heightened or deflated by the voice of Bob Dylan, singing songs from *Empire Burlesque* and *Oh Mercy*: "Songs full of that Biblical, apocalyptic imagery and with all that Rabbinical soulfulness", as Schrader puts it. The music isn't, then, just atmospheric dressing for the film, but is integral to the film's shape and movement: "It's the kind of thing that hasn't been done much in films and I like the idea of it. Lindsay Anderson tried something like it in *O Lucky Man!*, but there he actually put the singer [Alan Price] on screen, which I didn't want to do..."

Until last Friday, no one had foreseen any trouble in securing the rights to these songs: Schrader, after all, has been on friendly terms with Dylan for some years and directed a promo for his song 'Tight Connection' in 1985. Suddenly, however, word has come down that Dylan has refused rights and the most that has been salvaged over a weekend of telephone diplomacy is the singer's alternative offer of some other, wholly inappropriate tracks.

The degree to which Dylan's refusal throws Schrader's plans awry can be judged by looking at the weekend's dailies, which are projected for us at 11pm in a mid-town facility house. Schrader has shot two alternative versions of a scene in which LeTour supplies drugs to two yuppie girls. The first is a reasonably conventional sequence: master shot of LeTour coming into a restaurant, three-shot of LeTour and his clients, a couple of close-ups. The second is more haunting: a Steadicam follows LeTour in, then digresses from his walk to run over the details of a painting on the restaurant wall before rejoining him at the table in mid-deal.

Lachman explains that moves such as these are typical of the style he and Schrader have been working for in *Light Sleeper* – a style Schrader has said he first learned from Bertolucci's *The Conformist* and, closer to home,

Last September I had a dream about this character and realised that he wanted me to write about him

from the scene from *Taxi Driver* in which Scorsese chooses to pan away from Travis as he talks on the phone. "The camera isn't necessarily motivated by the action", Lachman says, "it's used in a more psychological way. Let's say that sometimes we use the camera at a higher angle to LeTour, so you feel a sense of oppression because the camera's above the eye line. And sometimes the camera will draw away from the character, to situate him in his environment or comment on his relationship with it. Before we started shooting, Paul and I looked at a lot of early Antonioni films – *Red Desert*, *L'Esclisse*, *La Notte* – because we liked the way he constructed images of character against landscape, and we wanted to explore the ways in which showing an environment affects the viewer's attitude towards a character".

The ostentatious Steadicam glide makes for a handsome but curious shot, which Schrader had timed to match the chorus of a particular song. Without Dylan's music, he suspects, he will be forced to adopt the more conventional shots unless he can find some other artist's songs to perform the same function. Other sequences may be even more badly marred.

Dylan's decision not to release the songs is far from being the first major set-back the film has met with in its remarkably swift trajectory from Schrader's dream life in September 1990 to shooting on the streets of New York in July 1991. As Linda Reisman points out the next morning in the temporary offices of *Light Sleeper's* production company, Grain of Sand Inc (a name taken from the Dylan song meant to conclude the film), it came very close to not being made at all. "We first went out with this project in January and we were astounded at the companies who turned us down, worldwide. I mean, this is a Paul Schrader film with Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon, it's originally budgeted at around \$11 million, which is relatively cheap... and no one wants it. So as more and more people passed on the project we had to keep cutting and cutting the budget, and still no one picked it up. I think in all maybe thirty companies passed".

Eventually a subsidiary of Carolco, Live Home Entertainment, agreed to put up \$2 million towards a co-production with a European company, but then the latter outfit pulled out. By this stage, Schrader was so adamant that the film be made that he decided he would fund pre-production out of his own pocket, and so the eight week process began – heedless of the omens implicit in the date of 1 April. At this point Ronna Wallace, a Carolco executive who admired Schrader's script immensely, passed it on to Mario Kassar, who, with only six weeks to go before the whole project would either start or fall to pieces, decided that Carolco would take *Light Sleeper* as a negative pick-up.

Then came the problem of how to make a \$11 million movie for a figure of more like \$5.5 million. One step was contacting Mac Brown, a highly experienced line producer with a long track record of filming in New York, and asking him to become *Light Sleeper's* co-producer. "The first time I saw their budgets", Brown recalls,



Dressed to sell: Susan Sarandon, who wants to move from drugs to cosmetics

"I said, 'Forget it, there's no way you can make a movie of this scale for so little'".

Two things helped change his mind. The first was that Schrader announced that he would take no director's fee, or rather would defer his payment so that he will only be paid if or when the movie earns enough at the box office. Following his example, Dafoe, Reisman and others agreed that they, too, would work for reduced rates. "Once a crew sees that the director and the producers and the star are all making sacrifices, then they all sort of pitch in and become part of the team", says Reisman.

What this means is that although the *Light Sleeper* crew is recognised as one of the best in town, they agreed to accept a day rate of some \$60 lower than they had been earning five years ago, when Mac Brown worked with them on *Ishtar*. The other consideration that swayed both Brown and his crew was the fact that there has been almost no movie work in New York since last September because of a months long dispute between the local unions and the industry, which has decided it can make its pictures just as well and much more cheaply in Toronto or South Carolina. After some further drastic budget-trimming, including a session in which Schrader shaved off over \$1 million at a stroke, shooting began on 28 May.

Despite its punishingly fast timetable, *Light Sleeper* is running a day and a half ahead of schedule by Tuesday afternoon, when the production has moved from Harlem to the more affluent latitude of West 90th Street. Here, an empty eighteenth floor apartment is providing the setting for two scenes in which LeTour makes a delivery to a rich, strung-out client and then, deciding that the man needs a detox clinic more than another gram, kicks him around a little before phoning for help.

The sun is even hotter and inside the apartment it is already stifling. The air-conditioning

can only be run between takes so as not to ruin the sound recording, yet Dafoe seems oblivious to the heat, and wears a heavy suede jacket (Giorgio Armani is once again dressing this Schrader film), while everyone else is in T-shirts and shorts. Schrader approached Dafoe with the script in December because "I was just so impressed with what he had done when we worked together on *The Last Temptation of Christ*. In these tales where you have one character who is really the only thing in the piece, it's all built on accretion of detail. The main character is essentially passive; he has to let the movie roll over him like waves on a beach. And one of the things Willem and I have been working on is that he should never try to take a scene - he should just give every scene away one after another, because then the character will start to emerge from this passivity".

Dafoe read the script and decided within twenty-four hours that he wanted to do it. "It's a beautifully written script and I instinctively knew it was right for me", the actor says. "It has the same feeling as *Taxi Driver* - it's a story that dies to be told. It gives you a very specific world and I wanted to be an object in that world". Dafoe was also taken with the paradoxical nature of LeTour, the way in which he holds centre stage and yet is often more acted on than active. "LeTour has a server's role, which is radical for a male character in the movies. I wouldn't say feminine, but it's a man who's placed in a different way in society than we usually see on the screen".

At 4pm it is time for the lunch break, and we head off to a local seafood restaurant where the talk inevitably returns to the question of what can be done about the Dylan disaster. There are three alternatives: perhaps Dylan will agree to allow another singer to record the specified tracks, in which case Schrader favours the idea of approaching Aaron Neville, who recently recorded an ethereally pure version of 'With God on our Side'. If Dylan refuses, then either a new artist will have to be commissioned to write songs in a similar spirit, or Schrader will have to ransack the record stores in search of appropriate titles.

Various names are put forward: the Van Morrison of *Astral Weeks*? ("Maybe a little too Irish", says Schrader.) Richard Thompson? ("Maybe too English.") The most likely option so far is that Schrader will ask a songwriter called Michael Been (who sings with a band Schrader admires, The Call, and played the apostle John in *The Last Temptation of Christ*) to take a look at the screenplay and see whether he can come up with anything suitable.

The 90th Street shoot continues until almost midnight, which means that it is too

LeTour's role is radical. I wouldn't say feminine, but it's a man who's placed in a different way

late to watch the dailies from Harlem, so we gather in mid-town first thing on Wednesday morning. Even unedited, the dailies are highly promising: *Jump-Offs* looks wonderfully rancid and the single shot of scene 73 looks every bit as good as Monday night promised it would, with Dafoe's laconic acting suggesting, rightly, a man who is clenched and brooding rather than a cocky tough guy. There is still time before the day's shooting begins to look at one or two rough assemblies on the Steenbeck. Schrader and his editor run through the scenes between Ann and LeTour, incidentally showing Schrader's penchant for sly moments of cinematic allusion: in the background of one scene, a television is showing a clip from Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*; a graceful tracking shot around Ann's apartment passes over a marble bust of Dante's Beatrice, last seen in Schrader's own *Cat People*. But such moments are not intended to be taken too solemnly - as Schrader says, he had planned to fight shy of overt visual echoes: "You don't like to be too self-referential... if you're ploughing that same row ten or fifteen years on, then a lot of the same roots are going to be thrown up".

With only a week of shooting left there might seem to be little for Schrader still to worry about apart from the Dylan problem, though he admits that he is anxious about how people will respond to the film. "In a sense I've gone back to the well here, just as Marty [Scorsese] went back to the well for *Goodfellas*. But I just don't know whether audiences will find this type of character relevant any more".

It is easy to see why Schrader allows himself gloomy thoughts. If company after company rejected his script because no one wanted to make a film about this particular brand of drug dealer, or because it contained none of the requisite moralising, or because the whole area seemed too dark, then it is indeed possible that there is no longer an audience for such subjects. And yet Schrader's last film, which was always intended as more of an art-house outing than a movie with mass appeal, nonetheless thrived in the marketplace. It wasn't in any sense a rival for *Pretty Woman*, but *The Comfort of Strangers* ran for months in London, performed healthily throughout Europe and is now in its nineteenth week and still going strong in New York.

What prospects, then, for *Light Sleeper*? It is already plain that the completed film will have all the elegant, restless visual imagination that critics admired in *The Comfort of Strangers*, allied to a screenplay that is at once highly charged and precisely crafted. But whether even this will be enough to win back the millions who flocked to *American Gigolo* and *Taxi Driver* is still an open question, and one that probably ought not to be pondered too deeply before the start of another gruelling day on location. As most of us get ready to go our separate ways to air-conditioned offices, screenings and elsewhere, Schrader sets off uptown with Lachman to spend the next twelve hours once again making numerous technical decisions, small and not so small, in the brutal summer heat.

Buffer Zo

Cinema in the Soviet Union is living through the same revolution as the rest of the society. Julian Graffy, who was in Moscow during the coup, identifies the films and directors that matter, describes the belated fame of Michelle Pfeiffer, and reveals how Stalin personally censored films



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Below left: target practice in Juris Podnieks' pioneering documentary, 'Is It Easy to be Young?'. Below: Viktor Proskurin broods and schemes as Stalin in Evgeny Tsymlal's 'The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon'

Outside the 'White House' on that fateful Monday, 19 August, we were continually bumping into acquaintances. My friend Evgeny Tsymlal met his cameraman on *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon*, a production assistant, Mosfilm actors. We kept asking each other for information, cycling and recycling rumours; we were learning how to live in a city under siege, how to resist a 'junta' that was simultaneously horrifying and ludicrous. Instinct seemed to lead us all to this grandiloquent building where initially, at least, the atmosphere was reassuringly lighthearted. We spent half an hour trying to persuade the soldiers who had immediately supported Yeltsin to accept the sandwiches that Evgeny's wife, Ira, had laboriously prepared, but it seemed that half of Moscow had already fed them.

In the course of the next two days the mood darkened, as information became harder and harder to come by, with television stations either off the air or serving up endless ballet and classical music, and the independent radio station Moscow Echo only popping up occasionally on ever-changing frequencies. The reports from CNN, picked up on a very poor signal, were initially informative but soon irritating in their less than total grasp of the situation on the ground. A desperate determination that their hard-won freedoms would not be wrested from them by a junta whose incompetence and buffoonery reminded them of some downmarket farce kept people circling around the White House despite the endless rain, despite the threats of gas attack and storming. And then, gradually, it was over, the junta were fleeing to the Crimea, had escaped abroad, been arrested at the airport, killed themselves, were skulking in their dachas – bit by bit, the true course of events emerged.

In the aftermath of those days, it became clear that film and television people had been engaged from the beginning in recording the resistance – this must be the most televised coup in history. The documentarist Iosif Pasternak and his cameraman had been filming inside and around the White House, using amateur equipment – their material shows how professional and unruffled the atmosphere inside the building was. While the Russian politicians convened, journalists set up a makeshift radio station and a newspaper, and arrangements were made to inform and entertain the crowd outside. Meanwhile television journalists, and especially the collective called 'Authorial TV', had teams out all over Moscow – the extraordinary footage they took was widely broadcast in the aftermath of the coup. The ►



◀ cinema journal *Iskusstvo kino* (The Art of Cinema), like so many other papers and magazines, had managed to print and circulate a single-page special issue in which film people expressed their support for the legitimate Yeltsin government and their resistance to the gang of eight.

On the night of Sunday 25, Russian Television broadcast a documentary in which filmmakers and actors recalled the events of those days and expressed the hope that, at last, the film industry would be free to realise its vast potential. As a sign of how quickly a normal hierarchy of values returned, one has only to recall the filming of these interviews outside the White House on Thursday 22. As Nikita Mikhalkov expatiated to his interviewer about his role in the resistance and his hopes for the future, excited whispers ran through the crowd: "It's Nikita, Nikita Mikhalkov. Get his autograph!" The number of jostling fans grew larger and larger and the interview collapsed into bemused, mirthful chaos.

As the second *Ten Days that Shook the World* drew to a close, the situation of the Soviet film industry is as uncertain as every other aspect of life in a country that may no longer exist. It is in this context that the following remarks about the industry are offered.

"These days, literally dozens of films flutter out on to the screen, like butterflies to a flame, helpless films, in which the characters fight, drink and 'make love' 'like in the West'. And there are very few indeed, you could count them on your fingers, that have anything to do with art". (Aleksandr Mitta, director)

"Our Soviet cinema repertoire is like an animal without a body. It has two wings, the American and the Indian. But as for what puts the weight on our legs – Soviet and European cinema – that's disappearing never to return". (Petr Shepotinnik, critic)

"I consider that the creation of guilds is an absolutely ruinous process which will lead to the destruction of our union". (Vadim Abdrashitov, director, on the introduction of creative guilds in the Union of Cinematographers)

"It's a strange period of mass anaemia, loss of interest in anything whatsoever, existing somehow by inertia. We're running on the spot, like a bad dream... Two years ago, to a chorus of ominous prophecies, the sixteenth Moscow Film Festival was either being tortuously revived or in its death throes, it was difficult to decide. Will the seventeenth be the last?" (Valery Kichin, deputy editor of the Soviet film magazine, *Ekran*)

"God knows where, whether it was abroad or back here, but a certain Soviet director had this to say about the times we're living through: 'Today, we're learning how to die'". (Aleksandr Shpagin, critic)

How can the Soviet cinema be in crisis? Even as recently as 1986, the success of films such as Tengiz Abuladze's *Repentance* in capturing the nation's mood attracted queues around the block for the day-long showings. When Juris Podnieks' documentary about uppity Soviet youth, *Is It Easy to be Young?*, opened at the



The way we live now: a bored night in Zhdanov from 'Little Vera', top left; rock musician Konstantin Kinchev (left) as the elder brother in 'The Burglar', above; the eccentric residents of a Leningrad apartment block in 'The Fountain', left

smaller auditorium of Moscow's vast Rossiia cinema, demand was so great that it soon replaced *Boris Godunov*, a work by one of the dinosaurs of the cinematic old guard, on the larger screen.

Today, however, few of the major cinemas are showing Soviet films, preferring American product that is either several years old or completely unknown. In the last five years, attendances have dropped from 4,000,000,000 a year to 2,500,000,000, partly as a result of a rise in ticket prices, but partly, it seems, as a reflection of the turbulence currently affecting all of Soviet life. And every day there are 14,000,000 unsold seats – cinemas, like so much else in the Soviet Union, being built on a grand scale.

In 1990, 215 Soviet and 178 foreign films were released on to Soviet screens. Asked to adjudicate between these 393 contenders, the readers of the biggest-selling Soviet film magazine, *Ekran* (Screen) have just chosen as their film of 1990 Stanislav Govorukhin's aptly titled documentary survey of contemporary Soviet life, *You Can't Live Like This*. *Ekran* readers' 'best foreign actress' for 1990 was Michelle Pfeiffer, for her part in Jonathan Demme's *Married to the Mob*. And seven of their top eight foreign films were Indian. The previous year (when the journal was still called *Sovetsky ekran*), they chose Petr Todorovsky's film about hard-currency prostitutes, *Intergirl*, and their favourite foreign actress was Liza Minnelli, for *Cabaret* – the opening of the Soviet distribution system is giving the viewers the chance to plug some very distant gaps in their cinematic education.

Attempting to keep up with Soviet cinema from Britain can prove a frustrating business.

British viewers were able to observe quite closely the 'unshelving' of hitherto banned films that followed the revolutionary Fifth Congress of the Union of Cinematographers in 1986, with enterprising seasons at London's National Film Theatre and Metro cinema, and later during Channel 4's *Soviet Spring*. Some of the unshelved works even got a cinematic release, notably *Repentance* and *The Commissar*, an honour also bestowed on two of the wave of new films about the lives of young people: Vasily Pichul's *Little Vera* and Valery Ogorodnikov's *Burglar*. But recently British distributors seem to have been looking in other directions, although Sergei Bodrov's 1989 *Freedom Is Paradise* rose without trace earlier this year, and in September the BFI premiered Yuri Mamin's 1988 'perestroika comedy', *The Fountain*.

Soviet films have appeared at festivals in London, Edinburgh, Cambridge and elsewhere, or at the occasional special event like South West Arts' New Leningrad Eccentrics film tour. The films to be shown at this year's London Film Festival offer a further chance to reassess the past and to assess the present achievements of Soviet cinema. There are two 'shelved' masterpieces. Mikhail Kalik's *Goodbye Boys* is based on Boris Balter's 1963 story of three boys leaving school in a southern town in the late 30s whose youthful innocence is suffocated by the onset of war. Kalik, who emigrated to Israel in 1971, considers it his favourite film, a lyrical lament for his generation. The film was completed just before the fall of Khrushchev in 1964 and finally given a very limited release after eighteen months of sustained sniping from the political and artistic authorities. Marlen Khut-

siev's legendary *I Am Twenty* (*The Ilich Gate*) took five years to make (1959-64) and captures uniquely the mood of the next generation, the children of the first thaw. After the intervention of Khrushchev in March 1963, key scenes were cut and a neutered version released. By a decision of the Conflict Commission in May 1987 the film was reconstituted to become an important document of the period. (Directors Andrey Tarkovsky and Andrey Konchalovsky have minor acting roles.)

Of the new films to be shown, Evgeny Tsygalkin's *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon*, from Boris Pilnyak's 1926 story, ominously traces the growth of that malign force which lurks beneath the surfaces of Kalik's and Khutsiev's films. In a sense a companion piece to his earlier *Defence Counsel Sedov* (shown at the LFF in 1989), *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon* tells of Stalin's surgical murder of his rival, the Commissar for War, Mikhail Frunze. Scenes of an idyllic family holiday at the beginning of the film are increasingly punctuated by images of horror and dread, with the motif of a lethal operation performed on a patient who is not ill serving as a metaphor for Soviet history.

The Second Circle by the prolific Aleksandr Sokurov begins with a young boy uncertain what to do with the corpse of his newly deceased father. This individual confusion soon gives way to hallucinatory and mysterious images of nightmare. In the director's words: "It is the internal, almost insensible movement of life that I wish to film".

Once Upon a Time There Lived Seven Simeons is a feature-documentary about the attempt by the Ovechkin family to hijack a plane to the West. It is directed by Vladimir Elsner and Hercs Franks, the Latvian director of *Supreme Court*, a documentary which followed the last year in the life of a convicted double murderer.

The press

One way to attempt to find out what's happening in Soviet cinema is to read the Soviet cinematic press. The leading film magazine, the monthly *Iskusstvo kino*, was founded in 1931. Its current circulation is 50,000, sold almost entirely on subscription, but it claims that only lack of paper supplies stops it printing 70,000. The largest-selling magazine is *Ekran*, a thirty-two-page, large-format illustrated publication founded in 1925, which appears eighteen times a year and has a current circulation of 405,000. There are other, newer magazines, and weeklies such as *Ogonek* often cover developments in cinema. But with the apparent demise of *Soviet Film*, it is *Iskusstvo kino* and *Ekran* that lead the field.

Iskusstvo kino has become a stimulating, radical journal which, as is the case with several of the so-called 'literary' monthlies, now feeds its readers with much that is beyond its official interests. Recent issues have included the writings of émigré novelists and pre-Revolutionary philosophers, not to mention Sigmund Freud, in addition to surveys of political developments. *Ekran*, for the time being, seems uncertain how far to go in shrugging off its old fan-

zine profile and becoming more serious. Both magazines have carried angry pieces condemning the killing in Riga in January of Juris Podnieks' cameramen Andris Slapins and Gvido Zvaigzne, *Iskusstvo kino* going so far as to describe it as "the tragic end of perestroika". *Iskusstvo kino* has also introduced new rubrics such as 'Press Office', a survey of the international cinematic press which in April devoted four pages to *Sight and Sound* (misleadingly to the Summer 1990 issue, that is to say shortly before this journal's own perestroika).

In a recent issue of *Iskusstvo kino*, the young critic Sergei Anashkin coined the term 'buffer cinema' to describe the intermediary stage Soviet cinema is now in. And it is the sense of living in a buffer zone (a state that precisely mirrors the situation of Soviet society as a whole) that informs much recent Soviet writing about film. Repeatedly critics write about emerging from an artistic system that had prevailed from the 60s, when works could be divided into those that supported official myths and those that opposed them, but were also defined in relation to them. "It's not just art that is searching for a form and a language at present, not just the cinema", writes film critic Elena Stishova. "Our entire life is searching for language and form". Elsewhere she describes the current cinema as "not yet an artistic text", but "rough drafts", the torments of learning to speak.

As befits life in a buffer zone, writers on Soviet cinema are looking in several directions at once. Part of their gaze is focused on the past. The reclamation of the work of Tarkovsky and Paradzhanov has been followed by a post-humous cult. And there have been brilliant dissections of the absurdities of cinematic censorship in the Brezhnev and Stalin periods.

If, in the 'period of stagnation', it was the bureaucrats, both in the studios and at the state cinema organisation, Goskino, who told film-makers what could and could not reach the screen, in the post-war years Stalin himself acted the censor at specially arranged Kremlin screenings. In a recently published extract from the memoirs of Sergei Yutkevich, the director describes the bizarre fate of his 1947 film, *Light over Russia*. After the Kremlin showing, Yutkevich was given a detailed list of charges and told that the film was politically faulty and could not be shown: "Comrade Stalin didn't like the film at all". "So are these his comments?" "No, he didn't say anything. But Comrade Bolshakov, who was sitting behind him as usual, took note of Comrade Stalin's snorts of disapproval. Then he took these notes on Comrade Stalin's reactions to Comrade Zhdanov and they deciphered them and wrote out the conclusions you have read".

The union

An area of concern in recent years has been the role of the Union of Cinematographers. The Union's Fifth Congress, in May 1986, at which the entire board was replaced and a number of radical initiatives proposed, was rightly seen as indicative of a general desire to sweep away old

systems. Over the ensuing years, the press has carried regular reports on a succession of plenums to monitor progress, as well as lengthy interviews with film-makers to canvas their views in preparation for the Sixth Congress, held one year early in June 1990.

The Sixth Congress elected the Tadjik cameraman and director Davlat Khudonazarov as new chairman and, in a sign of the times, Andrei Razumovsky, president of the Association of Independent Cinema and head of the independent production company Fora Film, to be his first deputy. The main practical results of the congress were that the union officially became the Federation of Sovereign National and Territorial Organisations of Cinematographers and introduced a system of professional 'guilds' for directors, actors, screenplay writers, cameramen, soundmen, set designers, critics and composers. Both moves had been vociferously opposed by some members, who saw in them a recipe for massive new bureaucratisation, and supported by others, who praised the way these things are organised in the US (slightly starry-eyed glances in the direction of the 'American model' have been a regular feature of recent debates).

The union also expressed its concern about authors' and artists' rights, about distribution (including video, TV and cable), about cinematic education and publishing, about the "catastrophic" state of the production and technical base, and about defending members' interests at a time of "transfer to a market economy, galloping inflation, very grave shortages and the threat of unemployment". And a stark warning was sent to President Gorbachev about the situation in Lithuania. Yet all in all, reactions to the Sixth Congress see the union as running to keep up with reality rather than setting an agenda; indeed some people argue that the union is increasingly irrelevant and that the real decisions about the 'new model' of Soviet cinema are being made by those more directly involved in making the films. This feeling of irrelevance is typical of current assessments of the activities of the Soviet chattering classes in general.

The market

One direction which is inevitably attracting (sometimes wistful, sometimes panic-stricken) glances from Soviet film-makers is the fabled market. As Andrei Smirnov, until June 1990 acting head of the union, wrote recently in the new cinema magazine, *Mirror*: "The national cinema can be preserved and strengthened only through the market". By October 1990, the loosening of the distribution system had led to the existence of eight state film markets and four 'alternative' ones, two in Tallinn, one in Odessa and one in Yaroslavl. The introduction of the market has challenged the whole system by which Soviet cinema is run.

In 1980, 1,950,000,000 tickets were sold for Soviet films; the figure for 1988 was only 982,000,000. And Soviet viewers are also choosing American models. At the first three markets held under the new conditions, the ►

◀ 166 buyers for republican and regional distribution chains were so unwilling to buy Soviet product that only eight of the 118 Soviet films offered made their money back. In 1989 only a quarter of new Soviet films were bought by all republics. The problem is exacerbated by the burgeoning of video salons (often showing pirated copies of films not yet bought for official distribution) and by allegations that the new unofficial companies are demanding too much to show their films. Film-makers complain of the existence of a new 'shelf' of undistributed Soviet films – despite its Cannes prize, *Freeze, Die, Get Up Again* was largely spurned by Soviet distributors. A festival of such films has recently taken place in Podolsk.

On the other hand, there are complaints that Soviet film-makers have no idea how to market their work, that they are unprofessional about supplying stills to journalists, that they pay no attention to titling, that poster design is appalling. And above all there is a repeated refrain that the official Soviet industry needs a new breed of producers to replace the old artistic directors of studios. Estimated figures for 1991 suggest that sixty films will be made by independents and 150 by state-run studios. The market will not sustain such a level of production, but so far the risks attached to commercial failure seem somehow to have been evaded and production has recently doubled. Viewing figures expose the fact that Soviet directors, who have traditionally disdained the idea of creating a dream factory, are not producing what today's Soviet viewers want to see.

In theory, the introduction of the market will shake out the system and the unsuccessful will go to the wall, but life in the cinematic

buffer zone mirrors the paradoxes of other areas of the Soviet economy. It seems to be possible to stand on the edge of the abyss for a very long time, for all the dark warnings that the time of reckoning is at hand.

The film-makers

Nonetheless, people go on making, discussing, even praising films. A notable feature of recent years is the relative absence of the pre-1986 big names, silenced either by their time-consuming bureaucratic activities for the union, by lack of sympathy with the new mood, or by fraught attempts to set up international co-productions, such as Eldar Ryazanov's abortive British co-production of Voinovich's novel about the Russian soldier Ivan Chonkin. Exasperation with Western methods of working has recently led Otar Yoseliani to return to the Soviet Union, but the co-production card is still being played. This year Cannes saw the premiere of two British co-productions: Karen Shakhnazarov's *Assassin of the Tsar*, starring Malcolm McDowell, and Aleksandr Mita's Gulag adventure *Lost In Siberia*, with Anthony Andrews, which the director describes as "maybe the best of all my twelve films".

It is remarkable how many of the works that are consistently singled out for praise are by first-time directors (not necessarily very young: Vitaly Kanevsky was born in 1935, Pavel Lungin, who made *Taxi Blues*, and Evgeny Tsybmal, in 1949). The Fifth Congress tried to encourage the work of young talent, and as well as the debut studio at Mosfilm there is now a small Workshop for First Films in Leningrad, set up under the auspices of Lenfilm in October 1988 with the express aim of allowing young directors to make their first feature before they are

forty. The studio made three films in 1989 and eight in 1990.

Lenfilm is also the home base for a generation of remarkable directors in their late thirties and early forties, headed by the documentarist and feature film-maker Aleksandr Sokurov, who has just finished *An Example of Intonation*, his second documentary about Boris Yeltsin. Among the other leading lights of this group are Konstantin Lopushansky (whose 1986 post-holocaust drama, *Letters from a Dead Man*, has been shown in Britain, but not his 1989 *A Visitor to a Museum*); Valery Ogorodnikov (*Burglar, Prishvin's Paper Eyes*), Sergei Ovcharov (*Lefty, It*), Yuri Mamin (*Neptune's Holiday, The Fountain*), Oleg Teptsov (*Mr Designer, The Initiate*) and Sergei Snezhkin (*Emergency on a Regional Scale*). Another group of younger film-makers attracting attention are the Kazakh New Wave, headed by Rashid Nugmanov, whose 1988 *The Needle* takes its hero, played by the rock singer Viktor Tsoi, into a world of Alma Ata drug-taking and violence, and Serik Aprymov, whose 1989 *Final Stop* describes the return of a young man to his village after army service.

In February this year, in several Moscow cinemas, the Association of Soviet Cinema Initiatives organised a festival entitled 'Chef-d'œuvres of European Cinema Unknown in the USSR'. *Iskusstvo kino* organised a poll of its critics, and chef-d'œuvre among the chef-d'œuvres was pronounced Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (perhaps the consistently disabling weakness of Greenaway's screenplays is less apparent to foreign critics), closely followed by Bertolucci's *The Conformist*, Kieslowski's *Decalogue*, Malle's *Lacombe Lucien* and Buñuel's *Belle de Jour*. Maybe it's time for someone in Britain to reverse the experiment?

Aleksandr Timofeevsky on the Moscow Film Festival and Jarman's 'The Garden' The bitter end

Until 1987, the Moscow Film Festival was concerned first and foremost with geopolitical prestige, its programme dictated not by quality, but by country of origin. But perestroika has changed all that, and now the 'Festival of Countries' is becoming more like other international film festivals. This, however, has led to new problems.

At present, the festival organisers can neither ensure that it will be a promotional event, nor assure a market for successful films. Squeezed between Cannes in May and Venice in September, the Moscow festival – which is held in July – is in an impossible position for showing world premieres by leading directors. Hence the organisers are faced with an unpleasant dilemma; either to accept films already premiered, or to try to remain a prestige festival and show films which it will be impossible to release.

Perestroika has shown that Russians faced with making a choice prefer not to do so, and the list of films at this year's festival conformed to the rule. As a result of lack of co-ordination on the part of the organisers, many of them had been premiered long before Moscow. On offer were two very different Soviet films – *Sons of Bitches* (*Sukiny deti*), actor Leonid Filatov's first film as a director, and *The Piebald Dog Running Along the Sea's Edge* (*Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria*), directed by Karen Gevorkian. Then there was the usual heap of Polish-Egyptian rubbish and three films by well-known Western directors – Oliver Stone's *The Doors*, Claude Chabrol's *Madame Bovary* and Derek Jarman's *The Garden*. Though these films have nothing in common, they were shown under the enigmatic banner, 'Salute to the Actors of the World'.

Jarman's *The Garden* stood head and shoulders above the other films. But neither the grand jury under the leadership of the Russian actor, Oleg Yankovsky, nor the press jury (in which I had the misfortune to be included) headed by Marcel Martin,

nor even the Christian jury awarded Jarman a prize or mention. Instead, the film caused a scandal.

Jarman's film demands a high degree of aesthetic refinement, not to mention a simple knowledge of what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Russian film world was forced either to admit that it hadn't understood a thing or to declare that there was nothing to be understood. It goes without saying that it chose the latter.

That was the aesthetic reasoning behind the decision, but there was also an ethical one. *The Garden* tells of the sufferings of homosexual lovers – not dismissively, which might have made the film more easy to endure for its homophobic audience, but with strong personal pronouncements through the director's own involvement in front of camera. In genuine innocence, a respected Moscow newspaper critic blithely wrote: "What is actually illogical is that homosexuality stands out so obviously. I don't know, but maybe these are the personal predicaments of the director".

There is no doubt that the Soviet

public's homophobia and traditional Russian hypocrisy influenced the verdict of the juries. But the desire to maintain the 'A' grade status of the festival also affected their choice, and for this *The Piebald Dog Running Along the Sea's Edge* could not have been a more suitable candidate for the prize. The film has a conventionally respectable subject, which is cleanly, even powerfully, captured, and its defence of small nations and the environment makes it politically sound.

The fact that *The Garden* was completely forgotten is regrettable, not because Jarman needs the Moscow prize, but for the sake of the festival itself, which passed over a unique opportunity to define its style. A prize for *The Garden* would have indicated a shift towards the experimental, avant-garde and post-modern, towards the general direction taken by pan-European cinematic culture. Instead, the festival is now faced with trying to hold on to its grade 'A' status within an elevated provincialism, the prospect of tottering on to the bitter end on its last legs.

A classy tale

In August 1945 the world celebrated VJ (Victory over Japan) Day and the dropping of two atomic bombs. We sang and danced in the centre of Bristol and got the bus home. The hot war was over; the cold war hadn't yet begun.

Next morning I began my National Service as a clerk/general duties in the air force. Square-bashing in some lost part of Northamptonshire, I soon found three other adolescents in my billet who like me had known some form of education. We'd learnt words like 'Hecate' and 'fardels', but not the four-letter ones we were hearing for the first time from our fellow conscripts. Nor were we used to their fighting spirit. Now that both enemies had surrendered, their only hopes for a good scrap lay with the "fookin Rooshans". But we four wanted the fruits of peace – art and culture, currently epitomised by Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*, a film we'd already seen several times.

One night we took the bus to the nearest town to wallow in it yet again – thrilling speeches, technicolour, Walton's music, the battle of Agincourt, England's triumphant conquest of France (and no Yanks to share it with) – an antique and boyish jingoism we could share after five years of a real war that had belonged very surely to the grown-ups. But there was another reason we emerged in ecstasy from that cinema: the film was too good for the working class, for the groundlings in our squad who might know how to mend a "fooking carburettor", but didn't have a clue about iambic pentameters. Teachers had tried to force *Henry V* on their pupils, taking school parties to special showings which turned into riots as the kids lost patience with long scenes where a load of "nancies" talked in a foreign language. But one day, we four idealists agreed on the bus back to camp, education would see that every man, woman and child would enjoy Shakespeare.

War in our time, we now knew, wasn't pretty; it meant millions dead, many more homeless and starving, ruined cities, rockets, gas chambers and now atomic bombs – whatever they were. Yet it had been the Ministry of Information that had asked Olivier to make a film of *Henry V* to remind us all that we'd invaded France before and won and could do it again. It's even dedicated to the Commandos.

That contemporary relevance is lost on anyone under sixty, but I can never see the film without remembering those momentous days. It's my madeleine. As others thrill to Glenn Miller or cosy lies about the blitz, I suck the sweet tea and am gone. From the moment that playbill comes fluttering through a blue sky to the sound of a warbling flute, I'm gripped.

Obviously the production was actory and snobbish – the posh vowels and stagey acting were all about Them not Us – but that's never enough to break the spell as I



Olivier's 'Henry V' conjures up memories of national service, working with Olivier at the Old Vic, and the social divisions of England for Peter Nichols, playwright and screenplay writer

run the video again. I'm a little upset by that slow pan over the tabletop model of Tudor London – with no people in the streets – but when we cross-fade into the Globe theatre and join that afternoon's audience, I'm rapt again, a stage-struck boy, as Chorus apologises for the limits of theatre ("this unworthy scaffold"), those very limits which demanded – and got – the most eloquent dialogue ever written. And the playwright is foreshadowing movies when he asks: "Think when we talk of horses that you see them / Printing their proud hoofs i' th' receiving earth".

Olivier, it seems to me, got it mostly right. Only the battle was shot on location – in Ireland, where extras and horses came cheap. Between the outdoor realism of those green fields and the confines of the Globe, most scenes were set against pretty, pastel-coloured castles and tents with false perspectives, copied from illuminated manuscripts. Apart from Hollywood musicals and *The Red Shoes*, it's the only successful filmic use of such obvious artifice, and it shows Olivier at a time when he could do very little wrong. His own performance is still irresistible – handsome despite the pudding-basin haircut, athletic, equestrian, wily, heroic, more Robin Hood than Prince Hal. My thinning hair still stands on my scalp at "Once more – unto the breach – dear friends" or the outrageous, yet now definitive, reading of:

"whiles any SPEAKS
that fought with US
upon Saint Crispin's DAAAAAY!"

Twenty years or more later I learnt close-to how easily Olivier could slip into the oratorical vein. He, Kenneth Tynan, Michael Blakemore and I sat in his office among the pre-fab huts that were the HQ of the National Theatre, drinking Arts Council Scotch and casting *The National Health*, a play of mine I later learnt he detested and was only doing on Ken's insistence. He felt that its farts and urine bottles and use of words that had shocked me at eighteen would lower the tone of his beloved Old Vic. It was at first disconcerting to be in his company, for one saw not only a sixty-year-old man with a toothbrush moustache and horn-rims, wearing



Olivier: every inch a king

a pinstripe suit and Garrick tie, but, as he poured another drink or turned his head, Maxim de Winter, Heathcliff, Darcy, Richard III, Hamlet the Blonde, Archie Rice, Astrov, Titus Andronicus, Coriolanus, Antony, the Duke of Altair, Marcus Crassus, the Mahdi and so on and on.

All was calm, until, refusing an actor we'd proposed, he launched into a story: "So large and strong, to be sure! When Vivien and I were managing the St James's, we took a boat party down the Thames, the whole company. I – as behaves the manager – kept aloof, albeit seeming to join the fun and games. My lovely prop men and carpenters, strong as oxen every one, dealt with the drunks. The man you've suggested was seen lurching towards Lambeth Palace. Off went the retrievers and down went your man in a flurry of arms, legs and heads..." (here he used the swirling arm movements with snaky hands from the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*) "...when suddenly from beneath this scrimmage I heard ringing across the riverfront your friend's voice..." (and now one hand was against his forehead, the other raised with a glass of Scotch, as he pulled out all the stops, shouting like the king) "...fuck Sir Laurence Ol-iv-ee-ay!" Then the dimuendo for: "I never worked with him again but followed his career with in-ter-est".

His Henry wasn't all bombast, though. On the night before Agincourt, the king goes disguised among his troops and hears a common soldier argue eloquently against war: "I am afraid there are few die well that die in a battle for how can they charitably dispose of anything when blood is their argument?". I'd played this part in a Bristol Old Vic production in the 50s, when John Neville as Henry was manifestly unconvinced by the reply Shakespeare gives him, a crafty evasion, yet another self-piteous homily on the duties of a king. The fact that Olivier wasn't bothered by this points to a certain cynicism in his make-up, or (in Raymond Durnat's words) "something hard, stony, resentful". He was an egoist, an actor also in the Latin sense of 'he who does', which is why he played the Hal and Richard so well but was lost with Hamlet.

One of the film's most thrilling moments for me is when, having long forgotten the playhouse, we are suddenly back in it as the king and his new queen turn to reveal that they are the original painted actor and a boy player. Then comes the crane-shot upwards as the wind band plays, the flag is lowered and here comes the flute and the playbill again for the final credits. Too symmetrical? For me it's right and satisfying that he should remind us at the end how, step by step, this very personal miracle has been achieved. It's one of the cinema's true originals: pretty pictures, good tunes and not a bad script either.

Masters of invention

Charles Barr

**Before the Nickelodeon:
Edwin S. Porter and the Edison
Manufacturing Company**

Charles Musser, University of California Press, \$60, 591pp

Babel and Babylon:

Spectatorship in American Silent Film

Miriam Hansen, Harvard University Press, £29.95, 377pp

**The Missing Reel: The Untold Story of
the Lost Inventor of Moving Pictures**

Christopher Rawlence, Fontana, £4.99, 306pp

The University of California is a teaching institution with an extensive film programme, a major film and television archive and a press with an established cinema list. Charles Musser's *Before the Nickelodeon* is published by the press, aided and sponsored by the archive, and will be used by the university. A kind of vertical integration.

Inexorably, American academic film study re-enacts the operations of the dominant Hollywood system it loves to analyse. Compared to other countries, it has terrific resources and a massive home market (the nationwide circuit of college courses). It takes over ideas and people from Europe in the Hollywood manner. And it has its network of journals and conferences that help bind the system together in the way the trade papers, conventions and professional journals used to do for Hollywood.

The process is epitomised in the recent work of David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, who have articulated a certain concept of 'classical' or dominant Hollywood cinema and laid it out in persuasive detail. This body of work has itself become 'dominant'. Like Hollywood, it cannot be ignored, whether or not you are sympathetic to it. New work identifies itself as working either within these parameters, or outside them.

Such dominance could not be achieved if the texts themselves did not live up to the system of production and promotion. Still on the Hollywood analogy, you have to give people what they want to read, or to teach with. The dominant film study literature has its own form of 'classical' structure, making a unity out of diverse thematic strands, and, like a good genre film, incorporating a network of references to preceding works: footnotes and bibliography do the work of generic echo and iconography.

This conceit is highly relevant to the two American books under review, both of which are concerned, precisely, with placing specific texts within their context of production, marketing and consumption.

Charles Musser and Miriam Hansen thank each other within their respective sections of acknowledgments and align themselves with the same "new generation of scholars" (Musser's term). And they both work with the same model of a dominant classical Hollywood system.

The core of each book is the detailed study of a figure, and a work, that helped to create that system and yet also resisted it. For Hansen, the figure is D. W. Griffith and the work *Intolerance*. Musser's book centres on the career and extant films of Edwin S. Porter. Both film-makers have their standard roles in the old film histories: celebrated for their pioneering discoveries, regretted for their failure to move beyond them into the predestined system of cinematic language.

A particularly clear example of the conventional teleological view – that there was a mature film language waiting there to be discovered, bit by bit – comes in William Everson's 1978 book *American Silent Film* (not quoted by Musser). Everson describes a 1905 film by Porter in which a woman is rescued from drowning in a river. This shot goes on a long time. "Finally, the woman is pulled back on the wharf and given artificial respiration. Only then is there a cut, to a shot of the arriving horse-drawn ambulance. The most elementary understanding of editing should have dictated that that shot be cut in [earlier]" (and the unnecessarily long rescue shot thus shortened). A double fallacy is plainly at work here: that the practice of the editorial cutaway had been evolved by 1905, and that Porter would necessarily have wanted to use it if it had.

Admirable revisionist work on Porter has already been done by writers like Noël Burch and on film as well as in print by Musser himself: this book is a companion to his one-hour 1982 film of the same title. With a wealth of textual detail, he enables us to understand Porter's adherence to what are neatly termed "cinematic strategies outside the repertoire of later classical cinema", and the way this was linked to his reluctance to go over to a hierarchical form of studio production.

Before the Nickelodeon is lucidly written, well illustrated and beautifully laid out, with an abundance of frame stills and relevant non-filmic inserts, making it one of the most pleasurable of scholarly film books to use. *Babel and Babylon* is less successful on all these counts, and is unlikely to attract the non-specialist reader, but it deserves the attention of the specialist who is prepared to struggle with the density of its prose and engage with Miriam Hansen's challenging reading of *Intolerance*. Griffith's notion of film as a universal language; his presentation of women; his

reluctance to embrace the full system of cinematic space that would become standard 'classical' practice – these topics are woven together in a *tour de force* of close analysis, which could do with a few more stills (or better still, read the book with a video of the film to hand). And, like Musser's, this book deals with much more than a single auteur. The long *Intolerance* section is bracketed by equally rich and dense chapters on pre-Hollywood cinema and on Valentino, both of them exploring the role of the female spectator.

Compared to these two examples of the academic mainstream, *The Missing Reel* is more lightweight. Though Rawlence is a professional film-maker (who subsequently made the book into a film for Channel 4), his text reads like the work of an engagingly eccentric amateur. He follows through his obsession to solve the mystery of Augustine Leprince, the French-born and British-based inventor who disappeared in 1890 on the eve of a scheduled journey to America to demonstrate his system of moving-picture projection. How far had his system been perfected? Did Edison's agents dispose of him, or did he turn his own back on debt and failure?

The book is, in Musser's terms, a 'syncretic' work in the early Porter style, veering wildly between time scales and modes: between historical romance that gives clichéd words and thoughts to Leprince and his associates, and the straightforward recording of archival research. In the end, Rawlence comes down, somewhat reluctantly, against the conspiracy theory, but along the way he conveys a lot about the ruthlessness of the early patent struggles. Most interestingly, he tells us in word and diagram (and in action, if you see the film of the book) about Leprince's multi-lens system of photography and projection, which he seems to have preferred to the single-lens one for its stereoscopic possibilities. Leprince, it seems, like Porter and Griffith, was ready to take cinema on a slightly different path from the one that led towards the classical model.

Talking heads

Alison Light

Talking Films

Andrew Britton (ed), Fourth Estate, £16.99, 266pp

**People Will Talk: Personal
Conversations with the Legends
of Hollywood**

John Kobal, Aurum Press, £9.95, 398pp

Time was when the interview book might have seemed a lowbrow item. Alongside fan magazines, hoarded programmes and autographed portraits, interviews with the stars could be dismissed by film buffs and cultural critics alike as belonging to the trivial and ephemeral knickknackery of the industry.

Some of this unease seems to linger in the misnomer 'The Guardian Lectures' for the events which provide the material for *Talking Films*. As Michael Cimino (one ►

**People Will Talk: for the
legendary Louise Brooks,
film acting was the
toughest, most degrading
job in the world**



◀ of the book's subjects) suggests, 'The Guardian Chat' would be a better title; of the eleven contributions selected from eleven years of talks at London's National Film Theatre, only one (by the socialist intellectual Raymond Williams) is a lecture proper. But the inclusion in *Talking Films* of culturally respectable figures such as directors Satyajit Ray and Margarethe von Trotta indicates how much, since the mid-70s at least, the highbrow interview has become an acceptable part of the publicity machine.

John Kobal in *People Will Talk* suffers from none of these cultural anxieties. His volume (an abridged version of the 1986 edition) pulls no punches in announcing itself as "personal conversations with the legends of Hollywood". Though he includes a few 'non-stars' like the shaping force behind the MGM musical, Arthur Freed, or portrait photographers George Hurrell and John Engstead, the glamour of the star-struck golden days of Hollywood is his unashamed subject.

It's tempting to see the interview book as a kind of oral history. But both these collections confirm that what makes a poor interview is not slavishness or sycophancy but the studied neutrality of approach which oral history tends to prize. The best interviews in *Talking Films* are those which go out of control, leaving the interviewer clinging to a wooden list of questions like a raft: the irruption of animal rightists into the discussion of *The Deerhunter*; Robert Mitchum running rings around Derek Malcolm with a consummate performance as a laconic good-for-nothing whose fortune, he claims, was made by his depraved face; or Dirk Bogarde's barely suppressed disgust at the banality of being asked what it felt like to go into Belsen.

Kobal's technique reveals that is far better to break all the rules. He interrupts his subjects, flatters, contradicts them, and finishes their sentences. He even points out the wayward nature of their memories. Most of all he recognises (unlike *Talking Films*) that if interviewing is one thing, reading interviews is another. The flatness of the question-and-answer routine is punctuated by a running commentary, stage directions, descriptions of facial expressions and gestures, and typographical attempts at reproducing the rhythms of speech. Occasionally, however, the atmosphere is just a little too relaxed. The self-absorption of many stars, like that of many intellectuals, does not necessarily make them good communicators.

Interview books like Kobal's can subvert our histories of the cinema. The Hollywood remembered by Gloria Swanson, Louise Brooks, Mae West and Anita Loos is a restless and rapacious cultural mix. This is so not only in its borrowing from so many older forms (theatrical melodrama, vaudeville, ballet), but in the hybrid careers and social mobility of its personnel: Eleanor Powell and Dorothy Gish's chequered lives as child actors or Olga Baclanova, moving across artistic divides to come from the Moscow Art Theatre during the Revolution to vamp it up on the silent screen. Nor is it a coincidence that



Keeping it in the family: Spike Lee photographed by brother David on the set of 'Jungle Fever'

Kobal gives pride of place to, in Gloria Swanson's phrase, "the people who made this business, the women". The sexual politics of cinema come vividly to life when Louise Brooks insists that acting is "the toughest, most humiliating and degrading job in the world" and when we hear later how often Rita Hayworth was told she was a "dumb Latin cunt".

At its best the interview book can be a great leveller – where else would Raymond Williams be found cheek by jowl with Robert Mitchum? At its worst it can shore up the many myths about cinema which depend upon the cult of the personality. Both *People Will Talk* and *Talking Films* remain 'topdown' accounts concentrated upon actors and directors. Don't the wardrobe mistresses, best boys, the make-up artists, set builders and camera operators have as much to tell us about the business of making films?

Take five

Paul Gilroy

Five for Five: The Films of Spike Lee

Terry McMillan et al, Stewart, Tabori and Chang, £14.99, 216pp

Five for Five is the latest in a series of publications and other franchise items tied in with Spike Lee's films. No less than the baseball hats, soundtrack albums and T-shirts that allow Lee's public to identify with his aspirations and to support his work financially, this supplementary marketing contributes to the film-maker's mystique by drawing a veil of subcultural difference around his project. It's a black film-maker thang that you wouldn't understand.

Like the earlier volumes co-written with Lisa Jones, this book underlines Lee's rather immodest sense of his work's historical significance. But unlike its script-based forerunners, *Five for Five* is in a large,

coffee-table format, combining (brother) David Lee's photographs from the sets of the five movies with an essay on each of them by five distinguished African-American writers: Terry McMillan, Toni Cade Bambara, Nelson George, Charles Johnson and Henry Louis Gates. Spike Lee himself and Melvin Van Peebles, his most notorious forebear in the film world, both contribute prefaces.

This gesture of opening out the work to wider critical scrutiny is bold. It suggests reflexivity, an intellectual openness and a degree of mutuality which make plausible the notion of a black cultural movement. But in fact, *Five for Five* delivers little of what it promises.

The text – set rather too small to be an easy read – is clearly secondary to the photographs, which draw attention to those elements Lee wants to recall or accentuate in the light of critical responses. The kindest thing that can be said about these images is that some of them are interesting. On this showing, David Lee is not yet the great photographer that his brother would like him to be and that the family myth demands.

The essayists' departures from their cheerleader roles are few. From a radical position somewhat at odds with Lee's own, Toni Cade Bambara offers an honest political indictment of some of the problems of gender, class and colour caste in *School Daze*. In an elegantly written and thoughtful treatment of *Mo' Better Blues*, Charles Johnson deals more tentatively with its crucial anti-semitism. Nelson George and Terry McMillan appear to be more comfortable with the task of maintaining audience morale, while Henry Louis Gates makes constructive comments about *Jungle Fever* without confronting its racial conservatism.

Lee himself is the only person who gets to survey the work as a whole. Sadly, his self-criticism is brief and largely technical. The book might have included less rever-

ential critical voices like those of Stanley Crouch and bell hooks, who have initiated an uninhibited and stimulating discussion of the awkward issues. The protectionist impulse that cocoons Lee and prevents genuine debate is couched in an assertive rhetoric countering Hollywood racism, which barely disguises a basic weakness and confusion. It's interesting that the legitimating ideology of racial kinship resonates strongly with the familial, even Oedipal, themes which mark all Lee's films, and are prominent in the marketing of Spike, Joie, David, and Dad.

The question of why this successful black film-maker needs to be so carefully insulated from anything except the ritual genuflection of his peers is inseparable from a wider issue: why have so many black Americans chosen to identify so closely with Lee's achievements and to embrace his presentation of himself as a victim of corporate racism?

Next generation

Li Cheuk-to

Perspectives on Chinese Cinema

Chris Berry (ed), BFI Publishing, £11.95, 234pp

When the first edition of this anthology was published by Cornell East Asia Papers in 1985, the New Chinese Cinema was just about to burst on to the international horizon. The fact that this second, expanded edition should appear two years after the 4 June 1989 crackdown is not only sadly ironic, but also timely. The developments in Chinese film-making and Chinese cinema studies over the past few years can be put in perspective now that the climax of the achievement of Fifth Generation films, reached when *Red Sorghum* (Hong Gaoliang) won the Golden Bear at Berlin in 1988, has passed. The hiatus is not only the result of the political freeze after the crackdown, but also due to pressure from the market.

Besides the acclaim the Fifth Generation films aroused, the interest of Western scholars in Chinese cinema has been stimulated by American-Chinese film exchanges following the open-door policy of Deng Xiaoping. But cross-cultural analyses of Chinese films can be problematic. Based on the assumption that theories developed in specific Western contexts are universally applicable, such undertakings are often susceptible to accusations of cultural imperialism. Within this volume, E. Ann Kaplan is obviously aware of this pitfall in her straitjacket feminist reading of *Army Nurse* (Nü'er Lou), since she includes director Hu Mei's own contrasting comments on the film. Unfortunately, this only serves to demonstrate the arbitrariness of her reading and the limitations of applying Western theories wholesale to Chinese texts.

In contrast, Chris Berry's analysis of Lu Ren's *Li Shuangshuang* and of Zhao Huanzhang's *The In-Laws* (Xi Ying Men) from

the perspective of sexual difference and spectatorship proves more fruitful. Close readings of the films reveal that the focus of identification is not, as in classical Hollywood cinema, the leading male figure. And his tentative explanation of an anti-individualistic aesthetic that is contrary to the Western model is also inspiring.

As Berry points out in his introduction, one of the major problems confronting scholars working on Chinese cinema is access to films. This inadequacy is partly responsible for E. Ann Kaplan's hasty conclusions. It is also apparent in Leo Ou-Fan Lee's otherwise worthy article on the tradition of modern Chinese cinema, written in 1982 before many classics from the 30s and masterpieces like Fei Mu's *Spring in a Small Town* (Xiao Cheng Zhi Chun, 1948) were shown in the West.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the best essays in this collection are either close textual analyses of specific films – Esther C. M. Yau on *Yellow Earth* (Huang Tudi) and Yuejin Wang on *Red Sorghum* – or comprehensive outlines of certain periods in the history of Chinese cinema (Paul Clark on the two Hundred Flowers periods, Tony Rayns and Chris Berry on the Fifth Generation). The latter are strongly supported by written documents; Yau and Wang are conversant with Chinese culture and traditions. However, the articles on Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema are both too sketchy to do justice to their subject matter.

Its weaker parts notwithstanding, this anthology is a significant contribution to the advancement of Chinese film study. Together with useful appraisals of the cinematic achievements, it also highlights areas that demand more attention and points out new directions.

Xue Bai in Chen Kaige's 'Yellow Earth': one of the high points in the work of China's Fifth Generation of film-makers



Reading Donald Duck

Laura Marcus

Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction

John Tomlinson, Pinter Publishers, £9.95, 187pp

John Tomlinson opens his discussion of the ways in which the concept of cultural imperialism is used in contemporary cultural studies with a 'media image' – a photograph of an aboriginal family watching television in a remote part of the Australian desert. He is quick to put the media debates in their place: however much time people may spend watching television and consuming other media products from the US and other 'advanced' countries, we should not neglect mundane activities which can also be seen as 'cultural'.

Analysts as diverse as Herbert Schiller (the doyen of 'cultural imperialism'), Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, whose *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comics* has become a classic, all tend to see cultural consumers as passive recipients of ideology, an idea which has largely been abandoned within mainstream media studies. Even soap serials like *Dallas* can be appropriated by viewers worldwide in very different ways.

Tomlinson next looks at the notion of cultural imperialism in which traditional national cultures are, in Jeremy Tunstall's formulation, "battered out of existence". We are reminded that cultures are not agents which can act autonomously or subordinate themselves to others; they are contexts in which people make choices. If the Japanese adopt Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* to see in the New Year, good luck to them.

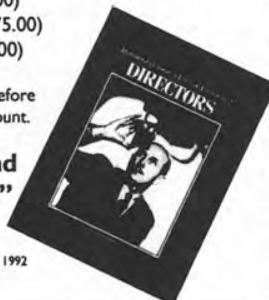
A third strand of thinking takes world capitalism as its central focus. (The virtual absence from the book of any discussion of the socialist countries is partially excused by the events of 1989.) Here too, there is a tendency to view culture too narrowly as an ideological instrument. The final variant of the concept of cultural imperialism adopts a complex model of 'modernity', a radically new form of social organisation which is seen as emerging some time between the Renaissance and the First World War. Tomlinson sees the notion of a (relatively) open future, allowing for societies' capacity to transform themselves, together with Cornelius Castoriadis' idea of the 'social imaginary' – societies' representations of themselves as part of their self-production – as offering the most promising framework for understanding cultural globalisation.

Nevertheless, these arguments are in danger of losing critical purchase on some aspects of cultural domination. Jürgen Habermas' notion of the 'colonisation' of the life-world – the erosion of informal social activities by formal bureaucratic or market systems – is briefly introduced as a corrective to some of the more enthusiastic celebrations of modernity. Together, ►

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these theorists make possible a more nuanced formulation of the processes of cultural imperialism.

Tomlinson ends by restating, following Anthony Giddens and other contemporary British sociologists, the ambiguities of these processes – emphasising the tension between deterministic accounts and the ideas of choice, agency and resistance which Tomlinson upholds. Although some contradictions remain in the book, it is an excellent survey of the field, demonstrating how the best of modern social theory can be used creatively to yield more adequate accounts of cultural operations than those imputations of false consciousness which themselves often seem imperialistic.

Grand delusions

David Caute

Jean Renoir: A Life in Pictures

Célia Bertin, translated by Mireille Muellner and Leonard Muellner, Johns Hopkins University Press, £21.50, 403pp

"The spectacle of real life is a thousand times richer than the beguiling inventions of the imagination", reflected the elderly Jean Renoir. "Reality is always magical". At the age of twenty, Renoir was pitched into the less magical reality of the First World War; a gallant fellow, with the tastes and spirit of a gentleman, he volunteered for the dashing vocations – cavalryman then pilot – emerging with serious wounds and a lifelong limp.

Did the war, with its carnage and vast ossuaries, obliterate the magic of reality? The disenchantment was not complete. The young generation of survivors with art in their hearts and money in their pockets launched their renaissance with frenetic optimism. The cult of the movies was part of the new magic. It took Renoir many years to detach himself from the cheerful elitism of his background and probably the main charm of his *oeuvre* was that he never quite did. He remained, subtly, *au dessus de la mêlée*, his work a delicate dialogue between the traditions within French cinema of 'light' and 'darkness', romance and realism, beauty and pain.

By 1930 Renoir had dashed off nine silent films. During the following decade fifteen more films followed, including *La Grande illusion*, *La Bête humaine* and *La Règle du jeu*. In France *La Bête humaine* (1938), with Jean Gabin and Simone Simon, became the most enduringly popular of Renoir's films. He could remember Emile Zola visiting his father, a smell of grease and leather about him, but what inspired Renoir initially was less the vast social-industrial documentation of the great naturalist than a single affective moment when the engine driver Lantier gazes at the bewitching Séverine in the park and she breaks the silence with "Don't look at me like that, you'll wear out your eyes"

Although Célia Bertin offers some valuable comments on Renoir's camera tech-



A hero and a gentleman:
Jean Renoir never quite detached himself from his elitist background

nique and sound mixing, the technical details surface too rarely in this elegant biography. And more needs to be said about the twin strands of Renoir's 'dark' depiction of individual doom – his use of chiaroscuro and expressionist lighting, Venetian blind shadows – and his lighter instincts, his attachment to the broader *comédie humaine*.

And so to the sublime *La Règle du jeu* (1939), one of the seminal works of modern European cinema. Bertin explores the film's genesis in Renoir's head, then describes a succession of set-backs: Simone Simon demanded more money than his privately assembled group of associates could afford; both Gabin and Renoir's actor brother Pierre also declined. Worse, Renoir put Nina Gregor in the main role because he had fallen head over heels in love with her, and then discovered that she couldn't act. At the end of it all he parted company with his devoted companion and editor of the 30s, Marguerite Renoir, having instructed her to respond to public hostility to the film with dramatic, indeed reckless, cuts from 113 minutes to 85, then up again to 100. Within weeks France was at war and the film was banned as likely to give the wrong impression of French society and morals. A decade passed before it was restored to its full footage.

Bertin has written a romantic biography of a great romantic, her emphasis on childhood, friendship, sensibility, dreams, passion, affairs, vision. She takes it as a fact of life, or of genius, that Renoir wrote his own scripts, and does not ponder his tendency to self-indulgence. The financing, producing, designing, editing, processing, dubbing, mixing and, finally, promotion of films receive less attention than the sentimental anecdotes of friends and colleagues.

We are introduced to Renoir's critical champion of the 50s, André Bazin, but we learn more about their friendship than about Renoir's status in the new film criticism. "He's tall and fat", observed Bazin. "When he comes upon you, all smiles, with his slight limp, he looks like a clown in a teddy bear suit, or an elephant with a sprained ankle". This is nicely described, but this reader would have liked to hear more about Bazin's theory of cinematic realism, depth of field and montage as applied to Renoir's work.

Conflicts of interest:
'La Règle du jeu' mixes sexual jealousy with social mores to highlight, with characteristic compassion, tensions between the classes



Star struck

Graham McCann

Stardom: Industry of Desire

Christine Gledhill (ed), Routledge, £10.99, 340pp

Theories about what makes a star abound. The most intellectually loose accounts suggest that certain people just have something inexplicably special about them. Academic work on the subject, pioneered in this country by Richard Dyer, has offered a more rigorous and versatile analysis, shifting the emphasis away from the question 'What is a star?' towards that of how stars function. It is the latter which is at the centre of Christine Gledhill's anthology.

Gledhill has produced a book for a relatively specialised audience acquainted with the ideological preoccupations and sometimes inelegant language of post-structuralist film studies. Many of the pieces, and several of the contributors (Dyer, Thomas Harris, John O. Thompson) are familiar. Also included are three essays exploring questions of ethnicity and stardom; of these, the most accomplished is Karen Alexander's thoughtful discussion of Hollywood's exclusion of black actors and actresses, such as Dorothy Dandridge, from star status.

The book is divided into four sections: 'The system' (which considers the material basis of the Hollywood star system); 'Stars and society' (a discussion of the cultural significance of stars); 'Performers and signs' (exploring the complex interaction between performance, text and genre); and 'Desire, meaning and politics' (whatever did not fit into any of the previous sections). Perhaps inevitably with this kind of collection, there is an uncertainty of ambition: it avoids committing itself to a particular thesis but also resists collapsing into relativism. The result is a book which is more sure of what it wants to avoid than what it really wishes to argue.

There is a tendency to shy away from the idea of particular human beings. Gledhill introduces one essay by saying that it "addresses the ideological construct at the heart of Western stardom – the individual person". This level of abstraction is not really helpful; a clearer sense of what it is to be an individual is required before explaining what certain egregious images of individuals connote. A substantial analysis of the concept of charisma might have alerted the reader to the difficulties inherent in the subject, but all we have on it are three (rather woozy) pages.

Another problem is the dominant writing style. It is sad, and surely unnecessary, that serious work on such a popular subject as stardom should be so exclusive in its choice of audience. One wonders how statements like "The formative capacities of film threaten to disrupt the project of constructing, from actor-located processes of signification, a psychologically consistent character" were allowed through.

But *Stardom* is not uniformly opaque. Charles Eckert's discussion of the con- ▶

Books

◀ tribution of merchandising to Hollywood, for example, or Charles Wolfe's analysis of the publicity photograph and the development of the star image are both entertaining. The book will certainly be of use to students working in this area. However, what the anthology reveals most clearly is how far we still are from understanding the nature of stardom. Greater clarity of thought on the basis of less capriciously ingested concepts, together with a respect for the reality of the people we choose to write about, would help.

Pearls of wisdom

Andy Medhurst

Trouble in Store: Norman Wisdom: A Career in Comedy

Richard Dacre, T. C. Farries and Co, £14.95, 183pp

"This is a Norman Wisdom film, and that, for those who know about these things, is almost enough in the way of explanation and criticism". So wrote *The Times* in 1962, a comment which encapsulates the supercilious indifference that has long been the dominant response of the critical establishment to British popular comedy. Films starring Wisdom, like those with George Formby or Frank Randle or the *Carry On* team, were regarded at best as mindless diversions for the plebs.

Happily, times change, and lowbrow comedy is increasingly receiving its proper share of critical attention as a rich thread in the fabric of British popular culture. Richard Dacre's meticulously researched book on Wisdom is a welcome part of this wider re-evaluation. It is not a study bristling with challenging theoretical insights. Its aims are more modest: to give an overview of the career of one of Britain's most successful comedians, whose most famous creation, the

pratfalling, belligerently pathetic, tight-suited Gump, struck a communal nerve.

Dacre (perhaps wisely) avoids probing into the national psyche to ascertain why Wisdom's blend of expert slapstick and sentimental infantilism had such an impact. Instead, he carefully situates Wisdom in the music hall and variety traditions and, quite rightly, spends the bulk of the book dealing with the decade of Rank comedies (of which *Trouble in Store*, 1953, *Follow a Star*, 1959, and *On the Beat*, 1962, are probably the best remembered) which made Wisdom the biggest box-office attraction in Britain.

Dacre attempts to group these films under authorial headings, depending on whether they were directed by John Paddy Carstairs or Robert Asher – a misplaced gesture, since in comedy of Wisdom's type, the director does little more than organise the traffic. Dacre is on more secure ground in his shrewd and scrupulous evaluation of the development of Wisdom's comic skills. Neglected movies like *Up in the World* (1956) and *A Stitch in Time* (1963) are not likely to find a more sympathetic critic.

Like most stars associated with a single, constraining image, Wisdom was desperate to break out and experiment. But the films in which he tried new techniques flopped dismally, the final straw being *What's Good for the Goose* (1969), where all traces of Gump were discarded and, in a lamentable attempt at 60s grooviness, Wisdom climbed into bed with a pretty teenager. It was his last film.

Trouble in Store is essential reading for all devotees and students of British popular comedy. Besides the analytical and biographical material, Dacre provides seventy pages of appendices, exhaustively (almost obsessively) listing Wisdom's films, stage, TV and radio appearances, and recordings. It lacks critical distance (Wisdom himself writes an approving foreword, and is pictured on the back cover alongside his touchingly star-struck champion). In fact, Dacre is so devoted that at times the book resembles a love letter; but reading other people's love letters is always fascinating.

Carrying on regardless: Norman Wisdom's attempts to break free from his pratfalling Gump persona failed dismally

Shorts

Broadway!

125 Years of Musical Theatre

Hollis Alpert, Little, Brown and Company, £25, 248pp

● Lavishly illustrated and beautifully produced history of American musical theatre, from Broadway's first major hit, *The Black Crook* in 1866, to *Miss Saigon*. Hollis Alpert's introduction traces the history of the genre through the minstrel show, vaudeville and the spectacular stage extravaganzas of nineteenth-century popular theatre. Most of the stunning illustrations, from the Museum of the City of New York collection, are published here for the first time.

Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power

Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner and Eva-Marie Warth (eds), Routledge, £9.99, 262pp

● Paperback edition of this 1989 anthology exploring new ways of conceptualising television audiences. Many of the articles deal with soap operas, which have a high profile in television studies – not surprisingly, perhaps, given the genre's growing global appeal.

Andrei Rublëv

Andrei Tarkovsky, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair, introduction by Philip Strick, Faber and Faber, £15.99, 188pp

● The original *kino-roman* published to coincide with the release of the restored version of the film and an ICA retrospective of Tarkovsky's work. Strick's introduction traces Tarkovsky's chequered career and the particular importance of this movie within his *oeuvre* as a whole.

High-Class Moving Pictures:

Lyman H. Howe and the Forgotten Era of Traveling Exhibition

Charles Musser in collaboration with Carol Nelson, Princeton University Press, \$45, 372pp

● A history of one of the itinerant showmen who exhibited the motion pictures seen outside large cities in the US during the 1890s and early 1900s. Entrepreneur Howe specialised in movies with 'high-class' subject matter (in contrast to those favoured by the more plebeian nickelodeons), creating elaborate programmes which conveyed ideological messages.

Issues in Feminist Film Criticism

Patricia Erens (ed), Indiana University Press, £12.50, 450pp

● A collection of essays from the 70s and 80s tracing the developments in feminist film criticism. Topics covered include feminist re-readings of Hitchcock, the problem of female spectatorship, critical reassessments of melodrama, feminist film-making and pornography debates.

The Hollywood Eye:

What Makes Movies Work

Jon Boorstin, HarperCollins, £16.99, 226pp

● Hollywood writer and producer Jon Boorstin attempts to get to the bottom of how film-makers strive to capture their audiences' hearts and minds. He argues that they use different and often contradictory techniques to stimulate and satisfy three distinct kinds of pleasure: the voyeur's, the vicarious and the visceral.



His life was as
extraordinaire
as his films.

JEAN RENOIR

A LIFE IN PICTURES
CÉLIA BERTIN

translated by Mireille Muellner
and Leonard Muellner

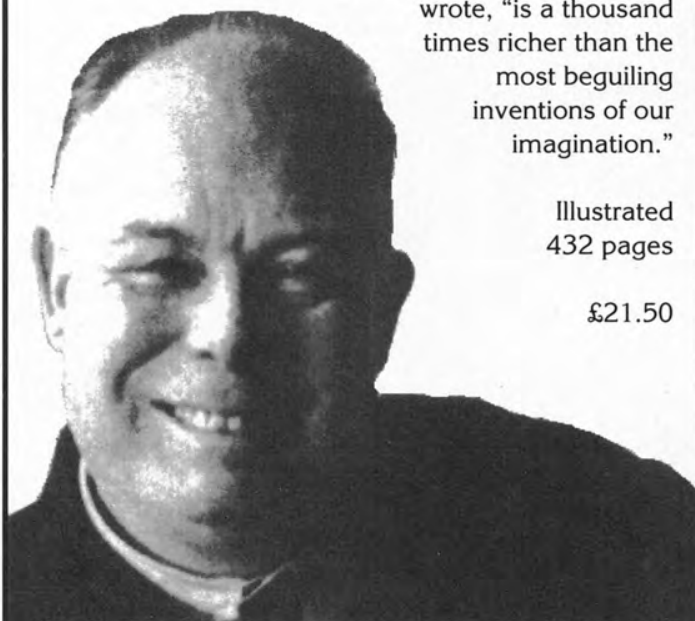
Son of the painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Sportsman, pilot, and playboy. And director of such classics of the cinema as *Rules of the Game*, *Grand Illusion*, and *The River*. Jean Renoir's remarkable life and career are the subject of this award-winning biography.

Awarded the prize Therouanne by the Académie française, this acclaimed biography is now available in English. At the urging of François Truffaut—and with the help of Renoir's family—Célia Bertin interviewed nearly everyone who knew the director in Paris, Provence, Bourgogne, and Los Angeles. Using first-hand accounts and previously unpublished materials, she places this colorful, charming, and brilliant figure in the context of his time, his culture, and the history of cinema.

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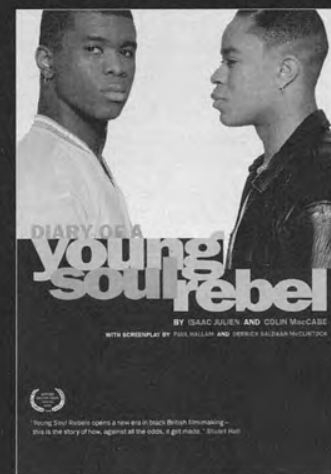
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Photograph by Michael Libby

Reviews

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and full credits for
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films and new
British TV films



Life's pageant: Keanu Reeves, Barbara Hershey...

Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter

Original US title: Tune in Tomorrow

Certificate
12
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Polar Films
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Joe Caracciolo Jnr
Producers
John Fieldler
Mark Tarlov
Production Co-ordinator
Alecia Larue
Unit Production Manager
Margaret Hilliard
Location Manager
John B. Griffin Jnr
Post-production Supervisor
Tia Lemke
Casting
Billy Hopkins
Associate:
Suzanne Smith
Extras:
Mark Fincannon
Associates
Stephanie Samuel
Extras Associate:
Pam Plummer
Assistant Directors
Eric Heffron
Greg Jacobs
Tia Lemke
Screenplay
William Boyd
Based on the novel by
Mario Vargas Llosa
Director of Photography
Robert Stevens
In colour
Special Effects Photography
Howard A. Anderson Co.
Camera Operators
Allen Easton
2nd:
Billy Bragg
Editor
Peter Boyle
Production Designers
Jim Clay
New Orleans:
James L. Schoppe
Art Director
Chris Seagers
Set Decorator
Jeanette Scott
Lead Set Dresser
Randall Milazzo
Set Dressers
Timothy Johnson
Sam Kome
Jeffrey Loy
Enrico F. Milazzo
John W. Sanders II
Doug White
New Orleans:
Wahnetta Trotter
Scenic Artist
Marlene Dermer
Storyboard Artist
Kalina Ivanov
Special Effects
Joe Di Gaetano III
David R. Fletcher
C. F. Burton

Music
Wynton Marsalis
Orchestrations
Sonny Kompanek
Music Producer
Steve Epstein
Music Supervisors
Peter Afterman
Diane Wessel
Music Editor
Christopher S. Brooks
Choreographer
Quinny Sacks
Costume Design
Betsy Heimann
Costume Supervisor
Andrea Weaver
Set Costumers
Melissa Binder
New Orleans:
Bonney Langfitt
Key Make-up Artist
Sharon Ilson
Make-up Artists
Sheryl Berkoff
Peggy Hannaman
Stacy Stewart
Additional:
Rudolph Eavey III
Kelly Gore
Sound Editor
Peter Pennell
ADR Editor
Harriet Fildow Winn
Sound Recordists
Edward Tise
Music:
Tim Geelan
Michael Farrow
Sound Re-recordists
R. O'Donoghue
D. Lester
Production Assistants
Mary-Jane April
Jonathan Elliot Chinn
Grady Cooper III
Ciceland Hoff
Taco Ketelaar
Katy McDougald
David Riebel
John Stuart Jnr
Gary Huckaby Jnr
Andrew Sanchez
Paul Sanchez
Dickie Wentz
Key Set:
Todd R. Pfeiffer
Stunt Co-ordinator
Peter Bucossi
Stunts
William Anagnos
Cynthia Neilson
Frank Orsatti
Don Picard
Animal Wrangler
Tim Seager

Cast
Barbara Hershey
Aunt Julia
Keanu Reeves
Martin Loader
Peter Falk
Pedro Carmichael
Bill McCutcheon
Puddler
Patricia Clarkson
Aunt Olga
Richard Portnow
Uncle Luke
Jerome Dempsey
Sam/Sid
Richard B. Shull
Leonard Pando
Paul Austin
Donald Loader
Joel Fabiani
Ted Olson
Crystal Field
Josephine Sanders
Jayne Haynes
Aunt Hortensia
Mary Joy
Frances Loader
Rob Kramer
Jamie
Anne Levine
Thomson
Faith Hope
Peter Maloney
Luther Aslinger
Irving Metzman
Producer Detroit Radio
Bill Moor
Duke Vermont
Deedee Pfeiffer
Nellie
Jon Van Ness
Brent Maconnochie
William Murray
Weiss
Peter Loader
Henry Gibson
Big John Coot
Peter Gallagher
Richard Quince
Dan Hedaya
Robert Quince
Buck Henry
Father Serafim
Hope Lange
Margaret Quince
John Larroquette
Dr Albert Quince
Elizabeth McGovern
Elena Quince
Robert Sedgwick
Elmore Dubuque
Danny Aiello III
Adam Lefevre
Chuck Margiotta
Large Albanian Men
Paul Burke
Albanian Protester
Jack Harvey
Fireman
Mert Hatfield
WXBU Engineer
Shirley Horn
Jazz Singer
Ishmond Jones Jnr
Waiter
Howard Kingkade
News Man Detroit
Ray McKinnon
Cub Reporter
Gladys Vega
Secretary
Jack Wallace
Policeman
Wynton Marsalis
Wessell Anderson
Alvin Batiste
Kimati Dinizulu
Wydcliffe Gordon
Herb Harris
Herlin Riley
Marcus Roberts
Joe Temperly
Reginald Veal
Dr Michael White
Todd Williams
Wynton Marsalis Band
Howard Johnson
Jimmy McGriff
Additional Musicians
Aaron Neville
Arthur Neville
Charles Neville
Cyril Neville
The Neville Brothers

9,339 feet
104 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Jon Amiel

New Orleans, 1951. Martin Loader, a twenty-one-year-old aspiring writer, works on the news desk at WXBU radio station. Soap-opera writer extraordinary Pedro Carmichael has just joined the team to spice up the station's serial, *Kings of the Garden District*. But Martin is more concerned about the arrival of his vivacious thirty-five-year-old Aunt Julia, who is twice divorced and on the look-out for husband number three. Julia is soon dating the young man, while the eccentric and mysterious Pedro begins drawing large audiences with outrageous storylines about incestuous relationships and baby-swaps (interlarded with equally provocative jibes about Albanians, which draw protests).

One evening, Pedro invites Martin and Julia to dinner then leaves them to their own devices, secretly taping their conversation as Martin declares his love and asks Julia to go to Paris with him. But Julia, concerned that Martin is getting too serious, takes up with the local doctor instead, and Martin is later horrified to find their conversation reproduced in Pedro's drama. Pedro continues to borrow material from their tempestuous relationship as Martin and Julia get together again, and also begins to instigate his own plots. He arranges for Martin's aunt and uncle (Julia's sister and brother-in-law) to find out about their relationship, and Julia is thrown out of her sister's house. Pedro persuades the two to elope, but the marriage ceremony he arranges - with a soap actor masquerading as a priest - turns out to be a fake.

Thinking that Martin is involved in the hoax, Julia runs away, purportedly with her doctor friend. Pedro persuades Martin to chase after the couple with a gun, while he returns to WXBU for the final instalment of his soap. Just before the programme goes on the air, an angry Albanian (with a curious resemblance to Pedro) sets fire to the building. The actors flee, leaving Pedro to finish the story amidst the flames. Martin meanwhile catches up with Julia, discovering that she



... by way of soap opera (Peter Falk)

is on her own and that Pedro has set them both up for a happy ending. Later they are visited by Pedro, who tells them he is going to write for television in New York - with Norwegians now as his pet target. Sailing together down the Seine, Martin and Julia are filmed by a familiar figure in a beret...

Admirers of Mario Vargas Llosa's spirited novel might quail at the story's transposition from Peru to New Orleans - presumably chosen as a jazzy and exotic approximation to Latin America. Along with this goes a blatant disregard for the way 'magic realism' produces the fantastic out of a local social reality (it's a little like transposing *The Dubliners* to Edinburgh). But British director Jon Amiel and novelist-turned-screenwriter William Boyd have produced a light and engagingly ludicrous comedy, a satire of soap conventions which might be described as an art-house version of *Soapdish*.

Amiel (*The Singing Detective*) seamlessly intertwines the galloping tales of Martin and Julia with the outrageous machinations of their soap-opera counterparts as they both head towards the farcical finale. Much of the film's pleasure derives from the perfect casting of Peter Falk as the blustering, often spiteful storyteller, who has a knack of materialising out of thin air - in a variety of disguises - to continue the tale. Falk - eyebrows askew a few degrees more than usual - plays him as a manic figure on the verge of a nervous breakdown, the fabulist as psychotic who spikes his work with random misanthropic prejudices (in the novel, the Albanian joke is more pointed as Pedro directs his venom at a string of South American nationalities). He also provides a simplified version of the comments on the symbiotic relationship between fiction and reality which make up the complex core of Llosa's novel.

But the film is also about the ridiculous taboos of 50s America which surround the romance between Julia and Martin. "You could almost be my son"; "I could almost have an Oedipus complex", they quip. After *White Palace*, *Thelma & Louise* - even Melissa and Lee in *thirtysomething* - the toy boy has become the acceptable face of the 90s. What disappoints here is that Keanu Reeves does not quite have the 'it' factor that would match Barbara Hershey's full-blooded performance as the feisty Julia. Martin may be supposed to be gauche, but Reeves is at times stilted enough to become one of the wooden characters from *Kings of the Garden District*.

Lizzie Francke

Chattahoochee

Certificate
15
Distributor
Hemdale
Production Company
Hemdale
Executive Producers
John Daly
Derek Gibson
Producers
Aaron Schwab
Faye Schwab
Co-producer
Sue Baden-Powell
Production Co-ordinator
Kathleen M. Courtney
Production Manager
Cathy Mickel Gibson
Location Manager
Kristi L. Frankenheimer
Post-production Executive
Randy Thornton
Casting
Mindy Marin
Extras:
Charlie Peterson
Assistant Directors
J. Stephen Buck
Douglas A. Raine
Philippe René Dupont
Screenplay
James Hicks
Director of Photography
Andrew Dunn
Colour
TVC
2nd Unit Photography
Philip Alan Waters
Camera Operators
Philip Alan Waters
Additional:
Walt Lloyd
Opticals
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Company
Cinema Research
Corporation
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Production Designer
Joseph T. Garrity
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Art Department Co-ordinator
Deborah Tagliaferro
Set Decorator
Celeste Lee
Set Dresser
Paul Arthur Hartman
Scenic Artist
Kenneth G. Deubel III
Special Effects
Richard O. Helmer
Music
John Keane
Costume Design
Karen Patch
Wardrobe Supervisor
Shari Griffin
Make-up Artists
Gandhi Bob Arrollo
Beard:
Maureen Stephanson
Titles
Frame Line
Sound Editors
Colin Ritchie
Dialogue:
Peter Bond
Foley Editor
Richard Hiscott
Sound Recordists
Ed White
Music:
Dick Lewsey
Sound Re-recordists
Gerry Humphreys
Dean Humphreys
Jonathan Frankel
Office Production Assistants
Emily K. Denton
Janet M. Childers
David M. Thornton
Stunt Co-ordinator
Bud Davis
Stunts
Michael Hanes
Joe Gilbride
Dennis Scott
Stand-in
Lee Zatkovic

Cast
Gary Oldman
Emmett Foley
Dennis Hopper
Walker Benson
Frances McDormand
Mae Foley
Pamela Reed
Earlene
Ned Beatty
Doctor Harwood
M. Emmett Walsh
Morris

William De Acutis
Missy
Lee Wilkof
Vernon
Matt Craven
Lonny
Gary Klar
Clarence
Timothy Scott
Harley
Richard Portnow
Doctor Debner
William Newman
Jonathan
Whitey Hughes
Mr Johnson
Wilbur Fitzgerald
Duane
Yvonne Denise Mason
Ella
Ralph Pace
Leonard
Wesley Mann
Tim Monich
Cops
Laurens Moore
Pa Foley
Mary Moore
Ma Foley
Peggy Beasley
Mae's Mother
F. Drucilla Brookshire
Dorothy L. Grissom
Hardin
Women on the Street
David Fitzsimmons
Ambulance Driver
Gary Bullock
Sadistic Attendant
David Dwyer
Goadling Attendant
Robert Gravel
Lucas
Marc Clement
Theo
John Brasington
Doctor Towney
Jim E. Quick
Doctor Everly
C. K. Bebb
Baker
Bob Hannah
Earl
George Nannerello
Patient Without Shoes
Ed Grady
Stream-of-consciousness Man
Kevin Barber
Upside-down Inmate
James "Fred" Culclasure
Hymn-singing Patient
Shane Baily
Ozell
Kevin Campbell
Inmate in Cesspool
E. Pat Hall
Inmate in Movie Theatre
Jerry Campbell
Inmate in Tunnel
Roger Jackson
Inmate
Suzi Bass
Harwood's Secretary
Jill Rankin
Governor's Secretary
F. Douglas McDaniel
Jimbo
Chris Robertson
Bill Collins
Bud Davis
Michael Easler
Attendants
Randy Randolph
Miami Guard
Kathryn Cobb
Miami Nurse
Jim Gloster
Miami Attendant
Charles Lawler
Traber Burns
Miami Cops
Kristi Frankenheimer
Weather Girl
Perry Simpson
Joe Loy
Quincy Cops
Wallace Merck
Patrolman
Don Wayne Bass
Guard
Mykel Marlette
Male Nurse
Raul Apartella
Man at Investigation
B. J. Koonce
Woman at Investigation

8,763 feet
97 minutes

USA 1989

Director: Mick Jackson

Florida, February 4, 1955.

Depressed by mounting debts, Korean War hero Emmett Foley goes crazy, firing off his service revolver and wounding a neighbour. Armed police surround his house and, despite turning the gun on himself, Emmett survives and is arrested. During a psychiatric examination, he reveals that he had wanted his wife Mae to collect more money on an insurance policy – \$25,000 if he were killed, as opposed to \$10,000 if he committed suicide.

Emmett is sent to the Chattahoochee State Mental Hospital, a primitive facility housing violent and mentally disturbed prisoners. When the feeble-minded Mr Johnson is attacked by a guard, Emmett and fellow convict Walker Benson intervene. Mr Johnson disappears from the dormitory for a few days and returns badly beaten. Although he receives regular visits from his sister Earlene, Emmett's wife Mae begins coming less frequently. Six months after spending his second Christmas in Chattahoochee, Emmett is reprimanded by the prison's doctor, Harwood, for revealing the beating incident in a letter to Mr Johnson's mother.

Unrepentant, Emmett starts to study law books. Visiting for the first time in three years, Mae announces that she is pregnant and plans to remarry. Emmett hears a rumour that an inmate was smothered to death by guards, and an incontinent prisoner is badly scalded after a guard pushes him under a hot shower. Emmett begins noting such incidents in his bible. With the help of Earlene, Emmett issues a writ of habeas corpus, arguing that since he has received no psychiatric treatment while incarcerated, the institution has no right to hold him. But his petition fails on a technicality.

Emmett's lists of abuses are smuggled out by Earlene, who swaps bibles with him during visits. By blackmailing a homosexual warder with an inmate lover, Emmett and Walker secure a key and the latter escapes. Emmett stays behind to finish what he has started. Some of his notes are discovered and he is subjected to electric shock treatment and debilitating drugs. Senator Lakely orders an investigation into conditions at Chattahoochee and Emmett appears before a state committee with a list of over 250 abuses perpetrated in just three years. Emmett is released from prison on September 15, 1959; as a result of the subsequent investigation, many prison staff are dismissed, sub-standard wards are demolished, and other prisoners are either transferred or released.

The difficulty with offering a fair and balanced assessment of Mick Jackson's debut feature – which was made before *L.A. Story* but then languished on the shelf for two years – is that it shares with Dennis Hopper's *Catchfire* the quality of being more interesting for what it might have been than for what it has become. In the production notes for the film, the director explains how it "moves in a very exhilarating way between tragedy and absurdity. Often things are a bit comic, absurd and tragic at the same time".

Unfortunately, there is no evidence of that here. What we have instead is a remorseless and depressing account of how a decorated war hero, obviously in need of sympathetic psychiatric help, is consigned instead to a Bedlam-like hell-hole presided over by sadistic guards and a complacent doctor. The authenticity claimed by the phrase "based on a true story" is also severely compromised by a plot which wallows in degradation and misery for almost seventy-five minutes, then wraps everything up with a choppy end sequence that juxtaposes Emmett's effectively understated voice-over ("I don't reckon I was a hero. I just did what I could, step by step, one day at a time") with a melodramatically over-blown climax.

Post-production interference, evidently, had something to do with the film's failings. Gary Oldman, fresh from Hemdale's *Criminal Law*, invited Jackson to direct his second project for the company, and the pair settled on James Hicks' 1982 script. After the film was completed, however, Jackson's original two-hour version was cut, and many scenes rearranged. Now only Oldman's engrossing portrayal of the initially unhinged, then humble and put-upon Emmett, together with Pamela Reed's perfectly restrained performance as his dedicated sister Earlene, offer any relief from the relentlessly grim and at the same time implausibly ramshackle result.

Nigel Floyd



Some kind of hero (Gary Oldman)

The Commitments

Certificate

15

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Companies

Beacon

Communications

A First Film

Company/Dirty Hands

production

Executive Producers

Arman Bernstein

Tom Rosenberg

Souter Harris

Producers

Roger Randall-Cutler

Lynda Myles

Co-producers

Dick Clement

Ian La Frenais

Marc Abraham

Line Producer

David Wimbury

Production Co-ordinators

Valerie Craig

Cate Arbed

Production Manager

Laurie Borg

Location Manager

Martin O'Malley

Casting

John Hubbard

Ros Hubbard

Assistant Directors

Bill Westley

Gerry Toomey

Cliff Lanning

Mick Walsh

Paul Barnes

Screenplay

Dick Clement

Ian La Frenais

Roddy Doyle

Based on the novel

by Roddy Doyle

Director of Photography

Gale Tattersall

Colour

Technicolor

Prints by Deluxe

Camera Operators

Michael Roberts

2nd:

Edward J. Adcock

Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Editor

Gerry Hambling

Production Designer

Brian Morris

Art Directors

Mark Geraghty

Arden Gantly

Set Decorator

Karen Brookes

Special Effects

Maurice Foley

Music Supervisor

G. Mark Roswell

Music Co-ordinator

John Hughes

Music Arrangements

Paul Bushnell

Music Liaison

Barbara Galavan

Songs

"Mustang Sally"

by Bonnie Rice, "Too

Many Fish in the Sea"

by Norman Whitfield,

Edward Holland,

"Mr Pitiful" by Otis

Redding, Steve Cropper,

"Bye Bye Baby" by

Mary Wells, "Show Me"

by Joe Tex, "Take Me to

the River" by

Al Green, Mabon

Hodges, "The Dark End

of the Street" by Dan

Penn, Chips Moman,

"Hard to Handle" by

Arletis Isbell, Allen

Jones, Otis Redding,

"Chain of Fools" by

Coway, "I Never Loved

a Man" by Ronnie

Shannon, "Try a Little

Tenderness" by

Harry Woods, Jimmy

Campbell, Reg

Connelly, "In the

Midnight Hour"

by Wilson Pickett, Steve

Cropper, performed

by The Commitments;

"Treat Her Right"

by Gene Kurtz, Roy

Head, performed

by Robert Arkins;

"Fiddle Jig"

(Traditional),

performed by Benedict

Fox; "Spring Hill

Mining Disaster"

(Traditional),

performed by

Aidan O'Halloran;

"Cathy's Clown" by Don

Everly, performed

by Cahir O'Doherty;

"Twenty Four Hours

from Tulsa" by Hal

David, Burt Bacharach,

performed by And And!

And; "Destination

Anywhere" by Nickolas

Ashford, Valerie

Simpson, performed

by Niamh Kavanagh,

Angeline Ball, Maria

Doyle, Bronagh

Gallagher; "Needles

and Pins" by Sonny

Bono, Jack Nitzsche,

performed by And And!

And; "Letter from

America" by Charles

Reid, Craig Reid,

performed by The

Proclaimers; "I Can't

Stand the Rain"

by Donald Bryant, Ann

Peebles, Bernard Miller,

performed by Angeline

Ball; "Can't Help

Falling in Love" by

Luigi Creatore, George

Weiss, Hugo Peretti,

performed by Colm

Meaney; "On the Good

Ship Lollipop" by

Sidney Clare, Richard

A Whiting, performed

by Anne-Marie

Scannell; "In a Wrong

World" by Alan Parker,

Paul Bushnell,

performed by Conor

Malone; "Blood Blood!

Blood" by Alan Parker,

Paul Bushnell,

performed by Jezzy Bell;

"Clare Jig"

(Traditional),

performed by Colm

Mac Con Iomaire;

"Beauty Queen" by

and performed by Emily

Dawson; "Poppa Joe"

by Mike Chapman,

Nicky Chinn,

performed by Dave

Kane, Kristel Harris,

Maria Place; "Shoulder

of the Road" by and

performed by Daragh

McCarthy; "Uileann

Pipe Music"

(Traditional),

performed by Brian

Mac Aodha; "I Dreamed

a Dream" by Herbert

Kretzmer, Claude-

Michel Schonberg,

performed by Tricia

Smith; "Heaven Knows

I'm Miserable Now"

by John Marr, Steven

Morrissey, performed

by Canice William;

"Baton Rouge"

by Alan Parker, Paul

Bushnell, performed

by Patrick Foy, Alan

Murray, Jody Campbell;

"Who's Sorry Now"

by Bert Kalmar, Harry

Ruby, Ted Snyder,

performed by

Philomena Kavanagh;

"Only the Lonely"

by Roy Orbison, Joe

Melson, performed

by Eamon O'Connor;

"Please, Please, Please"

by James Brown,

Johnny Terry,

performed by James

Brown with the

Fabulous Flames;

"Slip Away" by Wilbur

Tyrell, Marcus Daniels,

Armstrong Williams,

performed by Robert

Arkins, Angeline Ball,

Maria Doyle, Bronagh

Gallagher; "Moon

River" by Johnny

Mercer, Henry Mancini;

"All You Need Is Love"

by John Lennon, Paul

McCartney; "Nowhere

to Run" by Brian

Holland, Lamont

Dozier, Edward

Holland, performed

by Niamh Kavanagh,

Angeline Ball, Maria

Doyle, Bronagh

Gallagher; "I Can't

Turn You Loose" by Otis

Redding; "Do Right

Woman Do Right Man"

by Dan Penn, Chips

Moman, performed

by Niamh Kavanagh,

Angeline Ball, Maria

Doyle, Bronagh

Gallagher; "A Whiter

Shade of Pale" by Keith

Reid, Gary Brooker,

performed by Michael

Aherne, Robert Arkins;

"I Don't Like Mondays"

by Bob Geldof,

performed by Dave

Finnegan; "Hail Queen

of Heaven"

(Traditional),

performed by Maura

O'Malley; "Theme

from Shuft" by and

performed by Isaac

Hayes; "Jimmy

Mo Mile Stor"

(Traditional),

performed by Maria

Doyle; "Fame" by

Michael Gore, Dean

Pitchford; "Mouthful

of Lies" by Daniel

Binti, Gerry Leonard,

performed by Avant-

Garde-A-Clue; "I've Got

Dreams to Remember"

by Otis Redding, Zelma

Redding, Joe Rock,

performed by Andrew

Strong, Angeline

Ball, Maria Doyle,

Bronagh Gallagher

Costume Design

Penny Rose

Wardrobe

Supervisor:

Janty Yates

Mistress:

Maeva Paterson

Make-up Supervisor

Peter Frampton

Titles

Pacific Title

Supervising Sound

Editor

Eddy Joseph

Sound Editor

Clayton Collins

Foley Editor

Chuck Michael

Sound Recordists

Clive Winter

Tim Martin

Music:

Kevin Killen

ADR Recordist

Ted Swanscott

Sound Re-recordists

Andy Nelson

Tom Perry

Steve Pederson

Sound Consultant

Joe O'Herlihy

Production Assistants

Amy Hubbard

Tara Mullen

Anneliese O'Callaghan

Reuben Seid

Cast

Robert Arkins

Jimmy Rabbitt

Michael Aherne

Steven Clifford

Angeline Ball

Imelda Quirke

Maria Doyle

Natalie Murphy

Dave Finnegan

Mickah Wallace

Bronagh Gallagher

Bernie McGloughlin

Félim Gormley

Dean Fay

Glen Hansard

Outspan Foster

Dick Massey

Billy Mooney

Johnny Murphy

Joey "The Lips" Fagan

Kenneth McCluskey

Derek Scully

Andrew Strong

Deco Cuffe

Dead Again



Off noir: Kenneth Branagh

Certificate
15
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
Paramount
Executive Producer
Sydney Pollack
Producers
Lindsay Doran
Charles H. Maguire
Co-producer
Dennis Feldman
Production Office
Co-ordinator
Barbara Spitz
Unit Production Manager
William C. Gerrity
Location Manager
Ned Shapiro
Post-production Associate
Karen Marmer Allen
Casting
Gail Levin
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Extras:
Central Casting
Assistant Directors
Steve Danton
Tracy Rosenthal
Screenplay
Scott Frank
Director of Photography
Matthew F. Leonetti
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Robert McBride
Editor
Peter E. Berger
Production Designer
Tim Harvey
Art Director
Sydney Z. Litwack
Set Design
Henry Alberti
Joseph Hubbard
Eric Orbom
Set Decorator
Jerry Adams
Special Effects
Frank Toro
Gregg Hendrickson
Steve Foster
Music
Patrick Doyle
Music Director
William Kraft
Orchestrations
Lawrence Ashmore
Music Editor
Roy Prendergast
Songs
"Lush Life" by Billy Strayhorn; "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" by Sergei Rachmaninoff; "Tangerine" by Johnny Mercer; Victor Schertzinger; "Isn't It Romantic" by Richard Rodgers; Lorenz Hart; "Board Review" by Otis Connor

Costume Design
Phyllis Dalton
Costume Supervisor
Sandra Culotta
Costumers
Ann Culotta
Daniel Weinberg
Deborah Hopper
Make-up
Dan Striepeke
Leonard Engelman
Special Make-up Effects
Tom Burman
Bari Burman
Title Design
Phill Norman
Titles/Opticals
F. Stop Inc
Cinema Research Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
George Watters II
Sound Editors
Larry Carow
Midge Costin
Joseph A. Ippolito
Frank Howard
Gary Wright
ADR Editors
Fred Stafford
Bobbi Banks
Foley Editors
Victoria Martin
Fred Burke
Sound Recordist
Gerald G. Jost
Denis Blackerby
Music:
John Richards
ADR Recordist
Bob Baron
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Thom Ehle
Sound Re-recordists
Terry Porter
David J. Hudson
Mel Metcalfe
Foley Artists
Ken Dufva
David Lee Fein
Joan Rowe
Foley Mixers
Marty Church
Greg Curda
Production Consultant
Hugh Cruttwell
Production Assistant
Dana Delfs
Stunt Co-ordinators
Steve Boyum
Greg Barnett
Stunts
Clarke Coleman
Doug Coleman
Ken Endoso
Jean Epper
Kelly Malone
John Meier
Chad Randall
Jayleen Sun
Mickey White

Cast
Kenneth Branagh
Roman Strauss/
Mike Church
Andy Garcia
Gray Baker
Emma Thompson
Grace/
Margaret Strauss
Lois Hall
Sister Constance
Richard Easton
Brother Timothy
Jo Anderson
Sister Madeleine
Patrick Montes
Pick-up Driver
Raymond Cruz
Clerk
Robin Williams
Dr Cozy Carlisle
Wayne Knight
"Piccolo" Pete
Patrick Doyle
Erik Kilpatrick
Policemen
Gordana Rashovich
Handcuffed Woman
Derek Jacobi
Franklyn Madson
Obba Babatundé
Syd
Christine Ebersole
Lydia Larson
Vasek C. Simek
Otto
Hanna Schygulla
Inge
Gregor Hesse
Frankie
John Gould Rubin
Café Owner
Campbell Scott
Doug
Steven Culp
Patrick Doyle
Party Guests
Jo Anderson
Starlet
Yvette Freeman
Nurse

9,709 feet
108 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Kenneth Branagh

Los Angeles. Private detective Mike Church is approached to help discover the identity of an amnesiac, silent woman found in the grounds of St Audrey's school. After a drive round the city in Mike's car prompts no memories, Franklyn Madson, an antique dealer and hypnotist, offers a session to unlock the woman's secrets. Under hypnosis, she relives the past of Margaret Strauss, a British pianist married in 1948 to Roman Strauss, a German émigré musician executed the next year after being found guilty of killing his wife with a pair of scissors. The woman recalls their first meeting and their early lives in Strauss' grand mansion (the same building as St Audrey's school).

Awakening, the woman recovers her voice, but her memory remains lost; Mike, steadily succumbing to her charms, decides to call her Grace. A second session reveals Roman's jealousy at the attentions Margaret receives from journalist Gray Baker; Grace also begins to blur the identities of Roman and Mike, who undergoes a hypnosis session himself and relives further scenes from the Strausses' lives. Mike's newspaper friend, "Piccolo" Pete, identifies Grace as Amanda Sharp, an artist obsessed with scissor shapes. Mike then tracks down Gray Baker to a rest home; convinced that Roman was innocent, Baker suggests the solution lies with the musician's doting housekeeper Inge, who subsequently opened an antique shop.

Suspecting that Inge could well be the mysterious Franklyn Madson's aged mother, Mike questions her in Franklyn's absence and uncovers the truth: Margaret Strauss had been killed by Franklyn as a boy, who had been jealous of his mother's own love for Roman and had implicated the latter for the murder. Franklyn, returning to the antique shop, suffocates Inge. Realising that Amanda - Margaret's reincarnation - is now in grave danger, Mike rushes to her studio, where Franklyn has

sent her the actual murder scissors, hoping to drive her to suicide. Franklyn arrives to do battle, but is eventually impaled on one of Amanda's scissor sculptures, leaving Mike and Amanda free to pursue their romance.

If Kenneth Branagh were wearing his actor-manager's hat and someone presented him with Scott Frank's *Dead Again* script, the manuscript, one suspects, would be quickly tossed into a wastebin. Yet thanks to the glory of Hollywood here it is, trussed up in glossy, overwrought images: a suspense thriller which reworks key 40s ingredients (murder, amnesia, classical music, hypnosis) into a monstrous cinematic folly.

Just as *Henry V* became the framework for a display of pastiche styles, so Frank's unimaginative plod through the lurid school of psychological thrillers stimulates Branagh to another arch assemblage. Angled shots and symbolic objects (from anklets and scissors to the thrusting tower structure of Amanda's studio) are out in force, especially during the climactic struggle, top-heavy with slow-motion tricks and intercut flashbacks. The 1940s scenes strenuously approximate the high-contrast black-and-white of *film noir*; while composer Patrick Doyle - one of several key *Henry V* colleagues on board - lavishly mimics Bernard Herrmann's prowling, menacing music.

Casting and characterisation accentuate the artificial air. In terms of implausibility, there is little to choose between Branagh's charmless impersonation of Mike Church, fast-talking American private eye, and his brooding, slow-talking German musician, Roman Strauss; either way, there is little escaping the star-director's presence in scene upon scene. Even if regarded as a charade, *Dead Again* remains more risible than amusing. As for exploiting the dramatic possibilities of pointed household objects, *Edward Scissorhands* still has the field to itself.

Geoff Brown



Inter-cut: Emma Thompson

Dharmaga Tongjoguro Kan Kkadalgun? (Why Did Bodhi-Dharma Leave for the East?)

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
ICA
Production Company
Bae Yong-Kyun
Producer
Bae Yong-Kyun
Screenplay
Bae Yong-Kyun
Director of Photography
Bae Yong-Kyun
In colour
Editor
Bae Yong-Kyun
Music
Chin Kyn-Yong
Cast
Yi Pan-Yong
Hyegok
Sin Won-Sop
Kibong
Huang Hae-Jin
Haejin
Ko Su-Myoung
Superior
Kim Hae-Yong
Fellow Disciple

12,150 feet
135 minutes

Subtitles

South Korea 1989

Director: Bae Yong-Kyun

High above a modern, crowded city, the remote monastery on Mount Chonan is occupied by three people: the elderly monk Hyegok, the young monk Kibong, and the orphaned child Haejin. The boy was brought to the monastery by Hyegok, after a trip to the city temple for medical treatment. One day, Haejin throws a pebble that downs and wounds a jay; he guiltily tries to nurse the crippled bird back to health, but it dies. From that day on, another jay watches Haejin from trees and rooftops.

Haejin begins to ask questions about 'the world' (meaning the urban society he came from), and Kibong finds himself remembering episodes from his own past, when he was an ordinary man named Yongnan. He recalls his guilty abandonment of his blind mother when he entered the priesthood, his flight from the chaos and pollution of the city, and the words of the kindly superior at the city temple who sent him to learn from the austere Hyegok. He also recalls the decision of a co-disciple to return to the mainstream of life.

One night a cow breaks free from its shed near the monastery and starts roaming the woods. Hyegok guides Kibong's meditations, giving him the gift of a *koan* [Zen riddle]. Haejin meanwhile helps with the monastery's domestic chores. When the boy discovers that the corpse of the jay is being consumed by maggots, he gives it a proper burial and then cleanses himself in a rock pool. Later, he follows the roaming cow to another rock pool, where he falls asleep and dreams.

Hyegok falls ill and prepares for death, giving Kibong precise instructions for the cremation of his body. On the night that he dies, there is a musical ceremony at the city temple, involving a woman shaman. Kibong carries Hyegok's coffin to a high mountain clearing and burns it; the pyre is watched from a distance by Haejin, the jay and the cow.



Against interpretation: Sin Won-Sop

Kibong maintains a vigil until the embers have cooled. He scatters Hyegok's ashes over the mountain and in the pools and streams. Kibong entrusts Hyegok's few possessions to Haejin and leaves, promising that another monk from the city temple will come to replace him. When he has gone, Haejin decides to burn Hyegok's possessions. The jay, still watching him from the temple roof, flies away. Kibong leads the cow across the marshlands at the foot of the mountain.

The title is itself a *koan*, a Zen riddle with no immediate answer, asking how and why Zen Buddhist theory was carried from India to China, Korea and beyond. Bodhi-Dharma (supposed to have lived AD 460-534) went to China to preach a doctrine of Enlightenment founded exclusively on meditation: a profoundly passive doctrine, teaching that Nirvana – synonymous with emptiness – is attainable through a level of concentration that transcends conscious thought. This school of Buddhism, more widely known by its Japanese name 'Zen' than by its Chinese ('Chan') or Sanskrit ('Dhyana') names, stands apart from nine other principal schools, most of which teach very much more complex cosmogonies and prescribe much more active social roles for adherents. But Zen Buddhism had particular appeal in China, where its doctrines intersected with the precepts and practice of Taoism, and to a lesser extent in Korea, where it seemed to relate to some aspects of Shamanism.

Bae Yong-Kyun's film is an almost programmatic account of 'the way of Zen', with its three central protagonists clearly representing three ages of man, and its minimal plot (the creature that breaks free of its bonds, flashbacks to the 'heartless' severity of family ties) spelling out the various preconditions to the attainment of Nirvana. In accompanying notes, Bae rather disingenuously denies that his film is *about* Zen Buddhism but pleads universal relevance; he asserts a relationship between Zen and Heidegger's philosophy, Jung's psychology, Surrealist art and, most controversially, Erich Fromm's solipsistic concepts of mental health. He argues against ultra-rationalism and for irrationality and illogic, but the film is in some respects almost pedantic in its insistence on explication.

In this light, it is surprisingly easy to reduce the film to one central issue: the problem of coming to terms with physical death. It is not a problem for the elderly master Hyegok, who (whether or not he attains Nirvana) accepts his

impending demise with perfect equanimity. But it is a problem for both Kibong, who has to cremate Hyegok and scatter his ashes, and Haejin, who has to learn from his unthinking murder of a bird and from the passing of his surrogate parent. The implication in the final scenes, in which Haejin decides to burn Hyegok's possessions and is released from the watchful eye of the jay, is that these things come easier to an innocent child than they do to a troubled adult. None of this is exactly revelatory, and it is easy to see why the film has attracted derision from some reviewers.

But despite its underlying obviousness, the film *does* edge towards a seductive irrationality. There is no clear logic behind its narrative construction, which glides from exposition to flashbacks and dreams and back without noticeable variations in tone or style. The uncertainties about the narrative tense mesh with the overall languorousness of pace to work against clear-cut interpretations. And the images of the forest, the waterfall and pellucid rock pools have the kind of hard-edged beauty found in Ansel Adams' landscape photography: an almost surreal intensity that transcends picturesqueness and induces an unexpected degree of concentration in the viewer. Bae's framing and elegantly brief tracking shots are not at all *rigorous* in the Bresson manner, but the patterns of repetition and minor variation build up a cumulative weight that is potentially atmospheric.

Why Did Bodhi-Dharma Leave for the East? is the first Korean movie ever released in Britain, and no film could be less representative of the Korean film industry in general. Bae, a forty-year-old teacher of painting in Taegu, far from Seoul, spent four years making it, separating himself from the mainstream film industry as rigorously as his characters separate themselves from 'the world'. Its status as an independent art movie might suggest that it is breaking new ground, but that would be some distance from the whole truth. Korean cinema in fact has a long and distinguished tradition of tackling Buddhist themes; veteran director Im Kwon-Taek, for instance, has made two remarkable features (*Come, Come, Upward* and *Mandala*) that dramatise the conflicts between different schools of Buddhism and measure Buddhist ideals against social and sexual realities. Bae Yong-Kyun is merely the first Korean director to bring a 'purist' eye to such concerns while adopting a 'cottage industry' approach to film-making. That is where his singularity lies, not in his faintly precious attempt to grasp universal truths.

Tony Rayns

Reviews

Dead Again
Dharmaga Tongjoguro
Kan Kkadalgun?



Too much the norm: Michel Serrault

Certificate

12
Distributor
 Electric Pictures
Production Companies
 MS Productions/
 Sara Films/Cine 5
 With financial
 assistance from
 Canal Plus/Sofica
 Investimage/
 Investimage 2
Producers
 Alain Sarde
 Philippe Chapelier-
 Dehesdin
Production Supervisor
 Christine Gozlan
Production Co-ordinator
 Claude Bertonazzi
Production Manager
 François Menny
Assistant Directors
 Jacques Royer
 Philippe Tourret
Screenplay
 Dominique Garnier
 Christian de Chalonge
Director of Photography
 Patrick Blossier
 Part in Colour
Camera Operator
 Benoît Chamallard
Editor
 Anita Fernandez
Art Director
 Yves Brover
Special Effects
 Eric Faivre
Music
 Michel Portal
Costume Design
 Corinne Jorry
Wardrobe
 Hélène Robin
Make-up
 Catherine
 Demesmaeker
Titles/Opticals
 Les Films Miche
 François
Sound Recordist
 Jean-Pierre Duret
Sound Re-recordist
 Vincent Arnaldi
Sound Effects
 Marie-Jeanne
 Wyckmans
Subtitles
 Anne Brav,
 Laser Video Titres

Cast

Michel Serrault
 Docteur Petiot
Pierre Romans
 Ivan Drezner
Zbigniew Horoks
 Nathan Guzik
Berangère Bonvoisin
 Georgette Petiot
Aurore Prieto
 Madame Guzik
André Chaumeau
 Celestin Nivelon
Axel Bogousslavski
 Louis Rossignol
Maxime Collion
 Gérard Petiot
André Julien
 Forestier
Nini Crepon
 Collard
Nita Klein
 Madame Kern
Martine Mongermont
 Cécile Drezner
Naedège Boscher
 Alice
Jean Dautremay
 Gourlin
Michel Hart
 Colonel FFI
Dominique Marcas
 Madame Valéry
Jean-Michel Mole
 Monsieur Kern
Julien Verdier
 Chemist
Oliver Saladin
 1st Agent
Jean-François Soubielle
 2nd Agent
Maryline Even
 Madame Gibert
Jean-Louis Grinfeld
 Monsieur Gibert
Claude Barichasse
 Lascour
Lorella Gravotta
 Petiot's Neighbour
Jeanne David
 Widow's Lawyer
Philippe Polet
 Young STO
Marie Vallin
 Petiot's Concierge
Michael Caccia
 Barrack Sergeant
André Lacambe
 Inspector
Beatrice Avoine
 Prostitute
Jean Lio
 Vampire
Jacques Serizier
 Man Pursued
Philippe Dehesdin
 Bernard Charnace
Paul Vally
 Hairdresser's
 Customers

9,151 feet
 102 minutes

Subtitles

France 1990

Director: Christian de Chalonge

● Paris, 1942: Dr Petiot is watching a black-and-white horror film when he becomes so angry that he jumps into the screen... and enters his own surgery. After seeing his patients, Petiot meets a Polish couple, the Guziks, and Petiot (known to them as Dr Eugene) agrees to arrange a passage to Argentina for the Jewish Nathan Guzik. In the meantime, Petiot does his rounds through a desolate Paris, often refusing payment from his more impoverished patients.

Keeping his appointment with Nathan, Petiot takes him back to an empty building where they are interrupted by a man who insists that the doctor accompany him immediately. Petiot agrees and visits a château where he is greeted by French prostitutes and Nazi soldiers and is given several packages by his companion (a member of the French Gestapo). Later, while Petiot is burning the parcels in his cellar, a human head drops out. That evening, Nathan is given a 'vaccine' that causes him to asphyxiate. After disposing of his body, Petiot returns home to his wife and son.

1943: Ivan Drezner, a Jewish refugee, enters a barber shop (a French Resistance base) and asks for Dr Eugene. Although he claims to have just escaped from a prison camp, and needs an urgent passage to South America, he admits to Petiot that his escape was facilitated by the Germans in order to break the escape route. Losing Drezner's Gestapo tail, Petiot returns to his haunt, and after ensuring that the Nazis do not associate Eugene with Petiot, kills Drezner with a vaccine. Later Petiot is seen burning more packages in his cellar.

The next morning, heavy smoke attracts the police to a deserted building, inside which they discover human remains. Two months later, a disguised Petiot watches a newsreel about his horrific exploits. August - 1944: Petiot is now hunting Nazi collaborators in the guise of Valéry (a dead doctor). Unable to resist sending a letter defending his former activities to a Paris newspaper, Petiot is exposed when a colleague at work compares the published handwriting to Valéry's. Petiot is captured in a cinema while watching a horror film. A voice-over informs us of Petiot's collection of diverse possessions, all of which are put on display for the relatives of his unfortunate victims.

● Despite dealing with a man convicted of twenty-four murders, Christian de Chalonge's *Docteur Petiot* immediately distances itself from its contemporary

counterparts by having its serial killer leap - literally - into a larger-than-life Grand Guignol fantasy that he is watching in a cinema at the beginning of the film. The motive for this spectacular desecration is Petiot's disdain for the looming shadows and exaggerated menace on the screen, which presumably insults his intelligence (and perhaps his credibility as a mass murderer). At once funny and unsettling, Petiot's gesture sets the tone for the rest of the film which unfolds in an instantly recognisable but highly idiosyncratic visual manner.

Making a virtue of the fact that it has no intention of becoming a study in forensic psychiatry (the film pointedly refuses to explain Petiot's behaviour), *Docteur Petiot* plunges its anti-hero into a landscape every bit as nightmarishly over-the-top as the films he professes to despise. With Kohl lines under Petiot's eyes (shades of Conrad Veidt) and nods towards Robert Weine and Fritz Lang, the film is also knowing enough to incorporate the abstract industrial terrain of David Lynch (complete with howling pipes and eerie echoes).

Fortunately, such stylised imagery serves a function beyond just littering the film with 'buff' references. As shot by Patrick Blossier, the city is a mixture of shadows - light only begins to intrude after the Liberation, marking the end of Docteur Petiot's reign and his self-confessed love of the dark - and of jagged edges. The city's architecture becomes, in effect, both a sign of and an inspiration for the prevailing lawlessness (an apposite reflection of the Nazi presence), and underlines why a man driven by unnatural impulses would find himself perfectly at home there.

It's a measure of Chalonge's audacity that he brings his tale full circle by having Petiot arrested behind another cinema screen, and then proceeds to pull back into reality by blending the black-and-white queue of on-screen refugees with a procession of relatives trawling through Petiot's macabre horde of possessions in order to reclaim their dead. Petiot's diverse commitments - tirelessly altruistic doctor, loyal husband, caring father, a friend of the Resistance and a Nazi collaborator (at one point he is asked if he ever finds the time to sleep) - are all vividly illustrated and enmesh him inextricably with every aspect of his community. While other serial killers will always be social anomalies, and thus to some degree allow a comfortable distance between us and them, Petiot managed to operate at a time when a certain type of serial killing became the norm, and hence too close for comfort.

Farrah Anwar

Jacob's Ladder



Tim Robbins: between heaven...

Certificate
18
Distributor
Guild
Production Company
Carolco
Executive Producers
Mario Kassar
Andrew Vajna
Producer
Alan Marshall
Associate Producer
Bruce Joel Rubin
Production Office
Co-ordinator
Ingrid Johanson
Production Manager
Clayton Townsend
Location Managers
Patricia Doherty
Puerto Rico:
Jeffrey Flach
Location
Co-ordinators
Joseph Iberti
Puerto Rico:
Juan Hernandez
Post-production
Supervisor
Michael R. Sloan
Post-production
Co-ordinator
Noori Dehna
Casting
Risa Braham
Billy Hopkins
Heidi Levitt
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Extras:
Navarro-Bertoni
Casting
Extras Puerto Rico:
Zoraida Sanjuro
Assistant Directors
Joseph Reidy
Vebe Borge
Deborah Lupard
Screenplay
Bruce Joel Rubin
Director of Photography
Jeffrey L. Kimball
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Craig Haagen
Steadicam Operator
Larry Houston
Video Playback Operator
Ronald Mader
Editor
Tom Rolf
Additional:
Peter Amundson
B.J. Sears
Associate Editor
Vicki Hiatt
Production Designer
Brian Morris
Principal Art Director
Jeremy Conway
Art Director
Wray Steven Graham
Art Department
Co-ordinator
Claudette Didul

Set Decorator
Kathleen Dolan
Puerto Rico:
Leticia Stella-Serra
Illustrator
Anthony Wright
Scenic Artists
Kevin Golden
Dominick Drenzi
Cathy Ippolito
Paul Tappenden
Mathew Loeb
Peter Garzero
Stand-by:
Edward Garzero
Puerto Rico:
Diana Davila
Special Effects
Conrad Brink
Prosthetics:
FXSmith Inc
Bill Sturgeon
Prosthetics Designer
Gordon J. Smith
Head Mechanical
James Gwaley
Head Sculptor
Evan Penny
Sculptors
Russell Cate
Raymond MacKintosh
Joe Ventura
Models
Lorne Barrie
Jay D. McClennen
Michael Sherwin
Music
Maurice Jarre
Music Co-ordinator
Leslie Morris
Music Editor
Dan Carlin
Synth Ensemble
Michael Boddicker
Michael Fisher
Ralph Grierson
Rick Marvin
Judd Miller
Nyle Steiner
Songs
"Lady Marmalade"
by B. Crewe, K. Nolan,
performed by LaBelle;
"Please Mr Postman"
by R. Bateman,
G. Dobbins,
W. Garrett, B. Holland,
F. Gorman; "My
Thang" by and
performed by James
Brown; "Sonny Boy"
by B.G. de Silva,
L. Brown,
R. Henderson,
A. Jolson, performed
by Al Jolson;
"What's Going On"
by R. Benson,
A. Cleveland, M. Gaye,
performed by
Marvin Gaye
Costume Design
Ellen Mirojnick
Costume Supervisor
Michael Dennison
Head Costumer
Dana Jean Cicerchi

Costumer
Mary Gierczak
Make-up Artist
Richard Dean
Special Make-up Effects
Don McLeod
Arlene Smith
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
Milton C. Burrow
Sound Editors
Neil Burrow
Richard Burrow
Scott Burrow
Gordon Davidson
Mark Gordon
Edward Sandlin
Gary Shepherd
Chester L. Slomka
ADR Editor
Robert Heffernan
Foley Editor
Solange Schwalbe
Boisseau
Sound Recordists
Tod A. Maitland
Music:
Shawn Murphy
Sound Re-recordists
Andy Nelson
Steve Pederson
Michael Getlin
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Steve S.B. Smith
Special Sound Effects
Steven
Dewey/Musikwerks
Foley
Taj Soundworks
Vietnamese Technical Adviser
Trong Nguyen
Military Consultants
Warriors Inc
Captain Dale Dye
Captain Russell Ray
Thurman
Mike Stokie
Production Assistants
Dede Dennehy
Christie Colliopoulos
Set:
Juan Ros
Ellie Smith
Chris Swartout
Mike Viglietta
Office:
Delphine Kilianski
Puerto Rico:
Vince Juarabe
Juan Perez Rivera
Rosa Rivera
Hector Robles Diaz
Jorge Irizarry
Hernandez
Noel Serrano Colon
Abdiel Anglero
Stunt Co-ordinator
Phil Nelson

Stunts
Danny Aiello III
Jim Lovelett
Gary Tacon
Billy Anagnos
Deborah Watkins
Danny Dod
Gene Harrison
Don Picard
Peter Hock
Peter Bucossi
Cynthia Neilson
David S. Lomax
Andy Duppin
Manny Siverio
Jeff Ward
Greg Smrz
Mick O'Rourke
Michael C. Russo
Joe Fitos
Joel David Webster
Animal Trainer
Dawn Animal Agency
Head Pilots
Robert Smith
Ben Oliver
Cast
Tim Robbins
Jacob Singer
Elizabeth Peña
Jezzie
Danny Aiello
Louis
Matt Craven
Michael
Pruitt Taylor Vince
Paul
Jason Alexander
Donald Geary
Patricia Kalember
Sarah
Macaulay Culkin
Gabe
Eriq La Salle
Frank
Ving Rhames
George
Brian Tarantina
Doug
Anthony Alessandro
Rod
Brent Hinkley
Jerry
S. Epata
Merkerson
Elsa
Suzanne Shepherd
Hospital Receptionist
Doug Barron
Group Leader
Jan Saint
Santa
Kisha Skinner
Dion Simmons
Street Singers
Sam Coppola
Taxi Driver
Patty Rosborough
Drunk
Evan O'Meara
Sam
Kyle Gass
Tony
Gloria Irizarry
Mrs Carmichael
Lewis Black
Jacob's Doctor

Raymond Anthony Thomas
Policeman
Christopher Fields
Jamie Perry
Field Medics
Michael Tomlinson
A.M. Marxuach
Field Doctors
Antonia Rey
Woman on Subway
John Capodice
John Patrick McLaughlin
Army Officers
Bellina Logan
Emergency Ward Nurse
Scott Cohen
Resident Doctor
Davidson Thomson
Evil Doctor
Bryan Larkin
Jed
B.J. Donaldson
Eli
Thomas A. Carlin
Doorman
Carol Schneider
Becky Ann Baker
Diane Kagan
Nurses
Billie Neal
Della
Mike Stokie
Field Sergeant
James Ellis Reynolds
EMT Bearer
Dennis Green
Attendant
Brad Hamler
Byron Keith Minns
Orderlies
Reggie McFadden
Stephanie Berry
Chris Murphy
John-Martin Green
Partygoers
Arleigh Richards
Paul's Wife
Ann Pearl Gary
Barbara Gruen
Mourners
Joe Quintero
Street Kid
John Louis Fischer
Machine Gunner
Alva Williams
Masked Man
Elizabeth Abassi
Nora Burns
Alison Gordy
Jessica Roberts
Holly Kennedy
Blanche Irwin Stuart
Hospital Patients
Perry Lang
Jacob's Assailant

10,172 feet
113 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Adrian Lyne

New York, the 1970s. Jacob Singer, a downwardly mobile Jewish intellectual employed as a postal worker, is literally haunted by nightmares which stem from his experiences in Vietnam. Once happily married with a child, Jacob now lives with Jezzie, a co-worker, and gets some comfort from the ministrations of Louis, an osteopath who is treating him for his old wounds. However, Jacob is increasingly plagued by visions of demonic creatures walking the streets and subways of the city.

At a party, Jacob meets a palm reader who says that his lifeline suggests he has already died, whereupon he has a breakdown and imagines Jezzie fusing with a demon. He barely survives, switching periodically into an alternative dream existence in which he is still with his wife Sarah, and their dead son, Gabe, is still alive. Paul, a friend from the war, confides in Jacob that he is having similar episodes, and is coming to believe that they have something to do with a mysterious experiment performed in Vietnam. Jacob is given cause to believe Paul's ravings when the latter is blown up by a car bomb.

At the funeral, Jacob meets up with other members of his old unit who are all suffering from the same symptoms, and they band together to employ a lawyer to dig into the affair. The others are eventually scared off, but Jacob sticks with the case, and the lawyer determines that their unit might never actually have been deployed in combat, although they all have memories of a violent encounter. Finally, Jacob is cornered by Michael, an ex-drug designer who was blackmailed by the CIA into conducting tests on American soldiers, injecting Jacob's unit with an experimental drug called the Ladder which rid them of their inhibitions against violence, whereupon they turned on each other in a murderous orgy.

Michael, who offers an antidote to the Ladder, is destroyed by the demonic conspirators who have been tormenting Jacob. Louis then tells Jacob the truth, that he died during the Ladder experiment and that ▶



...and medical science (Danny Aiello)

Reviews

Docteur Petiot
Jacob's Ladder

◀ this is a fantasy world of his own creation, which he persists in remaining in because he is still too attached to his earthly life. Gabe appears to transport Jacob to the next stage of existence...

Written in 1981, Bruce Joel Rubin's script has had a rocky road to the screen – with Brian De Palma, Sidney Lumet and Ridley Scott among the directors interested in the project at various stages. It gained something of a reputation in 1984, when *American Film* listed it as one of the ten best unproduced screenplays in Hollywood. In the event, *Jacob's Ladder* was overshadowed at the American box office by the Rubin-scripted *Ghost*, a more bucolic variation on its theme with feel-good transcendence instead of nightmare torment awaiting its hero in an after-life limbo.

Rubin, who first tackled his after-life obsession in *Brainstorm*, evidently prefers to use standardised Christian images of angels and demons, which Adrian Lyne has rethought with more twisted and bizarre visions of physical abnormality. Certainly, Lyne does manage to make several scenes uneasily effective, as when a loud 70s party turns into a Boschian vision, or Jacob is trundled on a stretcher to a hell where rotting meat chunks litter the floor. Also, 'Tim Robbins' performance lends depth to a protagonist who seems to be conceived in terms of situations (a PhD working as a postman) and hoary clichés (a traumatised Vietnam veteran) rather than characteristics.

However, it is unfortunate that the film has arrived here so soon after the re-release of *Carnival of Souls*, of which it is effectively a blunt remake. Herk Harvey's film managed the plight of a soul trapped in limbo, much more elegantly, while revealing just how spurious the Vietnam conspiracy plot of *Jacob's Ladder* really is. As it stands, the film builds interestingly but collapses in its last third, as Michael takes Jacob into an alley to explain away in detail a plot that turns out to be a complete red herring – Jacob would still be in his situation if he had been killed in regular combat, or hanged at Owl Creek.

The film then trots out an angelic osteopath to deliver the message: "If you're frightened of dying and holding on, you'll see devils tearing your life away, but if you've made your peace, then the devils are really angels freeing you from the earth". Whereupon, the annoyingly named Gabe, played by the annoyingly angelic Macaulay Culkin, drags Jacob off into the light, leaving behind earthly confusions that have seriously blunted the effect of the film.

Kim Newman

Julia Has Two Lovers

Certificate

15

Distributor

Mainline

Production Company

Oneira Pictures

International

Executive Producers

C.H. Lehenhof

Randall Davis

Producer

Bashar Shbib

Associate Producer

Janet Cunningham

Delegate Producer

Michael Doward

Screenplay

Daphna Kastner

Bashar Shbib

Story

Daphna Kastner

Director of Photography

Stephen Reizes

In colour

Camera Operators

Stephen Reizes

Additional:

Geza Sinkovics

Editors

Bashar Shbib

Dan Foegelle

Music

Emilio Kauderer

Songs

"Hearts on the Line"

by Tim Ray,

performed by Tim

Ray, Carla Bozulich;

"I Believe in You",

"Instrumental

for Guitar" by and

performed by Tim Ray

Titles

Hollywood Optical

Systems

Supervising Sound

Editor

Fred Wasser

Sound Editors

Al Samuels

Additional:

Kip Gynn

ADR Editor

Bob Dadashian

Sound Recordist

Mike Sabo

Music:

Paul Dieter

ADR Recordists

Monette Holderer

Bobby Mapula

Ultra stereo

Sound Effects

Editors

Valeria Fredericks

Ed Lachman

Foley

Bobby Mapula

Monette Holderer

Jim Gillam

Cast

Daphna Kastner

Julia

David Duchovny

Daniel

David Charles

Jack

Tim Ray

Leo

Clare Bancroft

Jackie

Martin Donovan

Freddy

Anita Olanick

Ursula

Al Samuels

Landlord

Julie Roswal

Landlady

C.H. Lehenhof

Repairman

Lauren Fitch

Passing Girl

7,750 feet

86 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Bashar Shbib

Julia, an author of children's books, hesitates over her reply to live-in lover Jack's proposal of marriage, having become increasingly dissatisfied with the predictability of their relationship. As Jack is preparing to leave for the publisher's office where he works, Julia answers the telephone to a man, Daniel, who purports to be a friend of hers from some years back. Unconvinced, she nevertheless responds to his jokey confessional tone, and accepts his suggestion that they keep chatting as they go about their chores.

Julia soon finds herself talking for the first time about her earliest and most intimate sexual experiences. Daniel even remains on the line when Jack returns unexpectedly at lunchtime and makes hasty love to Julia in the kitchen. Jack accedes to Julia's request for a few days alone to make up her mind about their future, and repairs to his mother's. Julia agrees to meet Daniel and is disturbed when, while showing him the view from her beachside balcony, he is accosted by a strange woman, Jackie, who addresses him as Charles. Daniel pointedly ignores her, and he and Julia make ecstatic love; Daniel later slips away while Julia is asleep. Next day, Jackie reappears and tells Julia that she met Daniel exactly as Julia did, and that he is the victim of his obsessional and compulsively seductive behaviour.

Armed with Daniel's address, Julia walks in unannounced to discover Daniel once more protesting love down the telephone. She storms out in disgust and agrees to marry Jack. Daniel confronts Julia at her apartment, admits his obsession, but protests that he has genuinely fallen in love with her. An argument between Daniel and Jack develops into uneasy companionship over a bottle of whisky while Julia walks off in disgust. Next morning, Jack tells her that he is leaving, and she tells the eager Daniel that she needs a couple of months to herself to write, before she dances off down the beach.

Made on a shoestring budget and shot in two weeks, *Julia Has Two Lovers* not surprisingly bears the marks of those economies. Disappointingly, it has none of the insight or vivacity that might be compensating virtues. On paper, the project probably seemed promising enough as an examination, after sex, lies and videotape, of a woman caught between domestic predictability and obsession. But where that film succeeded through its stylish direction and visual and aural literacy, Bashar Shbib shows little

evidence of either, leaving his performers to flail their way through scenes which usually arrive at some culminating embarrassment: Julia dancing alone to a favourite record and coaxing Daniel to do the same, or the pair linked by a single strand of spaghetti across the dining table.

Shbib reveals a less than light touch by opening the film with a long-held shot of Julia and Jack filmed upwards through the bars of a supermarket trolley. Elsewhere, the dialogue all too often fizzles into banality, and there are awkwardnesses in handling the secondary characters (both men's mothers loom unnecessarily large). It is odd to read in the production notes that Shbib and Daphna Kastner used their own apartments as locations, because little sense of individual lives reaches the screen. Likewise, although the script tags Jack and Julia as publisher and author respectively, nothing of their professional existence enters the film.

What is lacking is any real autobiographical quality, as in the films of Henry Jaglom, with whom both Kastner and David Duchovny have worked. Yet, frustratingly, much of the story material which Kastner has incorporated carries a sense of authenticity: Julia's account of her drift into Jack's life (he publishes her stories), the practical difficulty she has getting out of it (it is his apartment although, contradictorily, it is he who later moves out), and the passivity at the heart of her sexual encounters. Sadly, the film proves a rather poor vehicle for its own themes.

Verina Glaessner



Links: Daphna Kastner, David Duchovny



Look, ma... Chris Eccleston

Certificate

15

Distributor

First Independent
Vivid Productions
In association with
Le Studio Canal Plus
British Screen

Executive Producer

Jeremy Thomas

Producers

Luc Roeg

Robert Warr

Associate Producer

Jane Frazier

Production

Co-ordinator

Mary Gwatkin

Location Managers

Mick Evans

2nd:

Andrew Pavord

Casting

Lucy Boulting

Assistant Directors

Patrick Clayton

Peter Freeman

David Carrigan

David Lawley-Waklin

Screenplay

Neal Purvis

Robert Wade

Director of

Photography

Oliver Stapleton

In colour

Aerial Photography

Peter Allwork

Editor

Ray Lovejoy

Production Designer

Michael Pickwood

Art Director

Henry Harris

Scenic Artists

Jackie Stears

Steve Hedinger

Special Effects

Supervisor

Garth Inns

Special Effects

Effects Associates

Dominic Tuohy

Paul Corbold

Peter Arnold

Music

Michael Kamen

Additional:

Ed Shearnur

Costume Design

Pam Tait

Wardrobe

Marion Weise

Make-up Artist

Fae Hammond

Titles/Opticals

Peter Govey Film

Sound Editors

Peter Best

Ted Mason

Sound Recordists

René Borisewitz

Music:

Stephen P.

McLaughlin

Richard Edwards

Sound Re-recordists

Gerry Humphreys

Dean Humphreys

Advisers

Courtroom:

Sonja Shields

Medical:

Dr Frank Besag

Special Consultant

Iris Bentley

Production

Assistant

Gina Carter

Stunt Co-ordinator

Gareth Milne

Stunts

Colin Skeaping

Nick Powell

Tom Lucy

Greg Powell

Tip Tipping

Paul Heaseman

Cast

Chris Eccleston

Derek Bentley

Paul Reynolds

Chris Craig

Tom Courtenay

William Bentley

Tom Bell

Fairfax

Eileen Atkins

Lilian Bentley

Clare Holman

Iris Bentley

Mark McGann

Niven Craig

Michael Gough

Lord Goddard

Ian Deam

Terry

Bert Tyler-Moore

Vincent

Steve Nicholson

Harrison

Niven Boyd

McDonald

Serena Scott-

Thomas

Stella

Ronald Fraser

Niven's Judge

Peter Eyre

Humphries

James Villiers

Cassels

Michael Elphick

Jack the Warder

Ben Brazier

Dennis Bentley

Murray Melvin

Secondary School

Teacher

Tony Sands

Small Boy in School

Charlie Creed Miles

Schoolboy in

Secondary School

Daniel Brazier

Boy, Fairview Road

Linda Marlowe

Reprieve Petition

Woman

Francis Hope

Big Cecil

Peter Jonfield

Butcher

Rudolph Walker

West Indian Driver

Delia Lindsay

Posh TV Lady

Denny Kirk

Mr Craig

Lottie Ward

Mrs Craig

Victoria Moore

Girl

Glyn Grain

Father

Karen Lewis

Mother

William Waghorn

Police Desk Sergeant

Robert Morgan

Miles

Colin McCormack

Army Recruit Doctor

Joe Melia

Harry Proctor

Vernon Dobtcheff

Court Clerk

Jimmy Flint

Jones, Prison Warder

Jeremy Sinden

Reporter

Terence Skelton

Conservative MP

Norman Rossington

Postman

Arthur Whybrow

Senior Prison Warder

Clive Revill

Pierrepoint

Peter Eccleston

Derek, age 8

Rebecca Eccleston

Iris, age 10

Geoffrey Drew

Trison Chaplain

Craig Turner

Derek, age 14

Alan Starkey

Nightwatchman

Matthew De Vere

Micky Poppins

Boys in

Nightwatchman's Hut

Joan Heal

Lady at Butcher's

James Bowers

Police Officer

Iain Cuthbertson

Maxwell-Fyfe

James Snell

Man in Suit

Linda Bassett

Mrs Miles

Viv Warrentz

Woman with Petition

Karl Johnson

Parris

Bill Dean

Jury Foreman

Chris Darwin

Milk Bar Owner

10,359 feet

115 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Peter Medak

London, 1941. During an air raid, young Derek Bentley is rescued after being buried under rubble. Seven years later, Derek suffers a fit after he and two friends are caught smashing up a workman's shed. At Kingswood Approved School in 1951, Derek is found to be epileptic and of low intelligence, and is released on probation. For a year, Derek stays in his room reading comics and film magazines, until his sister Iris draws him out.

Now aged eighteen, he meets sixteen-year-old Chris Craig, a volatile delinquent who introduces Derek to the criminal underworld inhabited by his older brother Niven. At school, Chris and the other boys swap guns and ammunition left over from the war. Derek is rejected for National Service because of his epilepsy. After Niven is arrested and sent to prison for twelve years, Derek avoids Chris for a short time; but despite his father's disapproval, the friendship is rekindled.

Chris, Derek and two other boys plan to rob a butcher's shop, but give up the idea when they discover the owner still inside. The two other boys leave, but Chris and Derek continue to a nearby sweet factory. Spotted on the roof, the boys are surrounded by armed police, and in the ensuing gun battle Chris shoots one of them dead and wounds another, before diving off the roof and severely injuring himself. Both boys are arrested and in court the prosecution claims that Derek - who is alleged to have shouted the inciteful words, "Let him have it, Chris" - is also guilty of murder.

The jury finds both boys guilty, but with a recommendation for mercy in Derek's case. Nevertheless, Derek is condemned to hang, while Chris - who is too young to be executed - is sentenced to be detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure. An appeal against the death sentence is refused, and despite petitions from thousands of members of the public, a reprieve is refused by the Home Secretary. On the eve of the execution, Derek dictates a letter to his parents. A plea to the Queen for clemency goes unheeded, and Derek is hanged. An end title reveals that Chris Craig left prison in 1964, after serving ten years, and that Derek's sister Iris is still trying to clear her brother's name.

The straightforward, chronological narrative of this often moving naturalistic drama is both its major emotional strength and its chief dramatic weakness. Having taken an inordinate amount of time to get to the night of the shooting, it then skips through the

crucial court scenes in order to regain its primary focus, wronged victim Derek Bentley and his long-suffering family. As a result, very little of any substance occurs in the first half of the film, which is comprised of plot exposition, scene-setting and incidental period flavour. Given this lack of momentum, a better strategy might have been to begin with the shooting, then trace the events leading up to it before exploring the legal and personal aftermath.

Let Him Have It is an 'issue-based' picture which consciously refuses to address the issues. To cite but one example, the question of whether Bentley ever uttered the incriminating words, "Let him have it", a matter much disputed during the course of the trial, is here simply presented as a fact. Scriptwriters Neal Purvis and Robert Wade prefer instead to dwell on the personal price paid by Bentley and the emotional cost to his family. Their script thus has a very different perspective from the television documentary based on David Yallop's book *To Encourage the Others*, which concerned itself more particularly with the dubious machinations of the legal and political establishment. By focusing so tightly on Derek Bentley and his family, the film also tends to lose sight of the broader social context - in particular, the argument put forward by several contemporary commentators that Bentley was sacrificed to appease those influential elements who feared an epidemic of teenage lawlessness.

Seen mainly from Derek's point of view, the early scenes emphasise his gentleness, vulnerability and gullibility, his naive perception of the dangerously exciting Craig distorted by a desperate need to belong, and by fantasy images gleaned from gangster movies like *White Heat*. Even so, one senses a degree of special pleading in the script's black-and-white portrayal of Bentley as the wholly innocent dupe of the maniacal and Svengali-like Craig. Full credit, though, to newcomer Chris Eccleston, whose delicately nuanced portrayal of Bentley lends an extraordinary power to the harrowing finale, in particular the scene in which he dictates the final letter to his parents. But inevitable comparisons with *The Krays*, a broadly related 50s crime movie also directed by Peter Medak, do not work to this film's advantage. Medak has done a workmanlike job, but without the complex narrative underpinning of Phillip Ridley's script for *The Krays*, he is left straining after a heightened visual style curiously at odds with the prosaic naturalism of the script.

Nigel Floyd

Certificate
12
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
Brooksfilms
In association with
Le Studio Canal Plus
Executive Producer
Ezra Swerdlow
Producer
Mel Brooks
Associate Producer
Kim Kurumada
Production
Co-ordinator
Paula Benson-Himes
Production Manager
Kim Kurumada
Location Manager
John Armstrong
Post-production
Supervisor
Leah Zappy
Casting
Bill Shepard
Todd Thaler
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
Mitchell Bock
Martha Elcan
Albert Cho
Catherine Schlesinger
Screenplay
Mel Brooks
Rudy De Luca
Steve Haberman
Story
Mel Brooks
Ron Clark
Rudy De Luca
Steve Haberman
Director of
Photography
Steven Poster
Colour
DeLuxe
Camera Operators
George Kohut
Additional:
John C. Koester
Video Playback
Lindsay P. Hill
Editors
David Rawlins
Film:
Anthony Redman
Michael Mulconery
Production Designer
Peter Larkin
Art Director
Josán Russo
Art Department
Co-ordinator
Kevin Constant
Set Design
Carroll Johnston
Set Decorator
Marvin March
Special Effects
Dave Kelsey
Ray Robinson
Curtis Decker
Models
Mark Stetson
Robert Spurlock
Music
John Morris
Orchestrations
Jack Hayes
Dance:
Ralph Burns
Music Editor
Eugene Marks
Song
"Easy to Love"
by Cole Porter
Choreographer
Jeffrey Hornaday
Costume Design
Mary Malin
Costumers
Carlane Passman
Roberto Carneiro
Head Make-up Artist
Fred Blau
Make-up Artists
Mark Bussan
Lesley Ann Warren:
Eugenia Weston
Title Design
Saxon/Ross
Film Design
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound
Editor
Jim Troutman
Sound Editors
Dwayne Avery
Edward Hirsch
Alan Schultz
Adam Johnston
Greg Stacy
ADR Supervisor
Michael Goodman
Sound Recordists
Willie D. Burton
Music:
John Richards
Sound Re-recordists
Andy Nelson
Steve Pederson
Tom Perry
Dolby stereo
Foley Artists
Casey Troutman
Bess Hopper
Production
Assistants
Scott Rosencrans
Victoria Halboth
Sean King
Colleen O'Neill
Michael Kanter
Ron Chesney
J.T. Thayer
Stephen Joubert
Christopher B. Stone
Stunt Co-ordinator
David Richard Ellis
Stunts
Jesse Wayne
Denise Lynne Roberts
Steve Boyum
Steve Davison
Richard M. Ellis
Justin De Rosa
Bill Hooker
Gary McLarty
Don Pulford
Dick Ziker
Dennis Frick
Larry Frazier

Cast
Mel Brooks
Goddard Bolt
Lesley Ann Warren
Molly
Jeffrey Tambor
Vance Crasswell
Stuart Pankin
Pritchard
Howard Morris
Sailor
Rudy De Luca
J. Paul Getty
Teddy Wilson
Fumes
Michael Ensign
Knowles
Matthew Faison
Stevens
Billy Barty
Willy
Brian Thompson
Mean Victor
Raymond O'Connor
Yo
Carmine Caridi
Flopouse Owner
Sammy Shore
Reverend at Wedding
Frank Roman
Spanish Interpreter
Marvin Braverman
Doctor Kahahn
Robert Ridgely
Ferguson
John Welsh
Dodd
Stanley Brock
Store Owner
James Van Patten
Wheelchair Attendant
Michael Pniewski
Male Nurse
Marianne
Muellerleile
Head Nurse
Anne Betancourt
Kathryn Skatula
Robin Shepherd
Nurses
Angela Gordon
Capacity Nurse
Mary Watson
Saida Pagan
Tamara Taylor
Henry Kaiser
Newscasters

Danny Wells
Mercedes Driver
Larry Cedar
Christopher Birt
Paramedics
Johnny Cocktails
Burrito-eating Bum
Clifton Wells
Taco Stand Owner
Paul Brinegar
Old Bellboy
George Berkeley
Derelict Outside
Flopouse
Anthony Messina
David Correia
Policemen
Helene Winston
Society Patron
Terrence Williams
Boy Dancing in
Doorway
Joan Crosby
Woman at Fire
Ira Miller
Man at Fire
James Mapp
Blind Man
Sam Menning
Old Wino
Ralph Ahn
Chinese Cook
Stu Gilliam
Desmond
Darrow Igus
Maynard
James Martinez
Dancing Vagrant
at Party
Rose DuCaine
Dancing Dowager
at Party
Ralph Mauro
Hors d'oeuvres
Vagrant at Party
Danny Dayton
Dirty Bum at Party
Christopher Weeks
Pompous Party Guest
S. Scott Bullock
Outraged Party Guest
Martin Charles
Warner
Dirty-faced Vagrant
at Party
Anthony Thomas
Mitchell
Nibbler Driver
Patrick Valenzuela
Street Person at Fight
Carmen Filpi
Pops
Casey King
Shopping Cart
Chauffeur
Ronny Graham
Priest's Voice
Jere Laird
Stock Market Reporter

8,594 feet
95 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Mel Brooks

Callous billionaire Goddard Bolt is within sight of realising his biggest dream: the creation of a business complex, Bolt City, in a derelict area of downtown Los Angeles. But rival developer Vance Crasswell lures him into a bet: if Bolt can survive thirty days on the downtown streets without any resources, Crasswell will give up his claim to the site. Bereft of money and credit cards, Bolt – soon rechristened Pepto by his fellow derelicts – finds the first days hard. When two hoodlums, Mean Victor and Yo, steal his shoes, Molly, a combative bag lady, comes to his rescue; she grudgingly takes charge of the novice, and shows him the local rescue mission.

After the hoodlums set fire to Molly's shelter, Bolt agrees to lure them into a trap at a chop suey restaurant, where they are brained by a cauldron of vegetables. Aggravated by Bolt's failure to forfeit his bet, Crasswell arranges to close down the mission on a night of torrential rain. Bolt survives the foul weather, but another derelict – Sailor – dies. On the thirtieth day, Bolt tells Molly about his real identity and the bet with Crasswell. Using Molly's money, they reach Bolt's lavish mansion, only to find Crasswell in residence after Bolt's former henchmen caved in to financial inducements and declared Bolt mentally unfit to control his own affairs.

After attempting to salvage some of his precious possessions, Bolt is ejected, empty-handed. Increasingly desperate, he lands in hospital after a furious argument with a crazed derelict known as J. Paul Getty. Sent into a coma by a drug overdose, he is awakened with Molly's loving encouragement, and determines to fight back. At Crasswell's groundbreaking ceremony on the downtown site, with television crews in attendance, Bolt rallies the derelicts, who disrupt proceedings. Crasswell, trapped in a caterpillar tractor's pincers, finally accepts defeat. Two weeks later, Bolt has regained legal control of his affairs; he scraps his Bolt City project, establishes plans for low-cost housing and a health clinic, and marries Molly.

Past comic film-makers have successfully snatched laughter from the jaws of death, or at least severe poverty. Chaplin managed it in his slum-bound amalgams of slapstick and sentiment; Preston Sturges managed it in *Sullivan's Travels*. Mel Brooks, though, must be one of the least likely candidates for comedy with a social point; the best of his past films swing happily

between Hollywood spoof, vaudeville schtick, and strip-joint vulgarity, never brushing against reality at all.

Hardly surprising, then, that *Life Stinks* rarely establishes a fruitful relationship with its chosen world of the homeless, crazed and destitute. Much of the time, the downbeat, resolutely grimy settings – piled high with filth, cardboard homes and assorted street offal – prove a hurdle Brooks' jokes can never surmount. Some of the jokes themselves – such as Molly's impersonation of someone noisily dying in their sleep, or Sailor's observation that a jutting pair of neckbones are a sure sign of approaching death – skirt the boundaries of what can be considered comic. The film only truly roars to life once Brooks' humour reaches the stylised level of burlesque: the hospital scene, for instance, where Bolt is drugged into a coma by a harassed doctor constantly prescribing 500 millilitres of this and that, or the slapping routine between Bolt and J. Paul Getty, where the two derelicts argue about who is the richer.

Brooks' prescribed character brings its own problems. At first, Goddard Bolt – outrageously cocky and callous – seems a pleasant variation on Brooks' usual screen persona. But once stripped of gold jewellery, toupee and credit cards, Bolt becomes a patsy, staggering helplessly and tediously from one misfortune to another. Lacking an assertive central character to drive the film forward, *Life Stinks* soon disintegrates into unco-ordinated moods and routines: from routine slapstick and a few Chaplinesque tears to a splashy rag-factory dance, staged in the manner of a 50s MGM musical. For all its attempt to derive inspiration from a current social blight, *Life Stinks* only increases the feeling of irrelevance and superannuation hanging over Mel Brooks' recent output.

Geoff Brown



Light brush: Mel Brooks



Putting on more than a show

Certificate

12

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Enigma

In association with

Fujisankei

Communications

Group/British Sky

Broadcasting/County

NatWest Ventures

Producer

David Puttnam

Associate Producers

Uberto Pasolini

Gabriella Prekop

Production

Supervisor

Marc-André Brunet

Production

Co-ordinator

Julia Overton

Production

Managers

Lajos Ovari

France:

Stella Quef

Unit Managers

Tamas Kolpaszky

Laszlow Szucs

Gabor Ujhazy

Imre Pumer

Casting

Patsy Pollock

Additional Casting

France:

Romain Bremond

Germany:

Risa Kes

Italy:

Donatella Botti

Assistant Directors

Gyorgy Ordody

Laszlo Janiczek

Zsuzsa Gurban

Gabor Pinter

Zsuzsa Czege

France:

Marion Lary

Laurence Jones

Screenplay

Istvan Szabo

Michael Hirst

Director of

Photography

Lajos Koltai

In colour

2nd Camera

Operators

Balazs Belafalvy

Balazs Sara

Editor

Jim Clark

Production Designer

Attila Kovacs

Set Dressers

Laszlo Makai

Agi Menyhart

Music

Richard Wagner

Music Director

Marek Janowski

'Tannhäuser'

Performed by

Philharmonia

Orchestra

Piano:

Catherine Cournot

Elizabeth:

Kiri Te Kanawa

Tannhäuser:

René Kollo

Wolfram von

Eschenbach:

Hakan Hagegard

Venus:

Waltraud Meier

Young Shepherd:

Renate Spingler

Landgrave:

Matthias Holle

Walther von der

Vogelweide:

Kim Begley

Heinrich der

Schreiber:

Robin Leggate

Biterolf:

Rodney Macann

Reinmar von Zwer:

Roderick Earle

Chorus:

The Ambrosian

Singers, led by John

McCarthy

Tannhäuser Highlights:

(Executive Producer)

Renate Kupfer

(Co-ordinator)

Marianne Kach

Music Producer

Martin Fouque

Music Editor

Dick Lewzy

Music Consultant

Daisy Boschan

Coaches

Singing:

Kenneth Woollam

Music:

Valeria Csanyi

Costume Design

Catherine Leterrier

Make-up Artist

Jean-Luc Russier

Sound Editors

Ian Fuller

Dialogue:

Kant Pan

Foley Editor

Peter Holt

Sound Recordists

Simon Kaye

Music:

Sean Lewis

Mike Hatch

Dick Lewzy

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Bill Rowe

Ray Merrin

Production

Assistants

Natasha Ross

Tannhäuser Highlights:

Ingrid Chmella

Cast

Glenn Close

Karin Anderson

Niels Arestrup

Zoltan Szanto

Moscu Alcalay

Jean Gabor

Macha Meril

Miss Malikoff

Johanna Ter Steege

Monique Angelo

Maite Nahyr

Maria Krawiecki

Victor Poletti

Stefano Del Sarto

Marian Labuda

von Schneider

Jay O. Sanders

Taylor

Dieter Laser

von Binder

Maria de Medeiros

Yvonne

Ildiko Bansagi

Jana

Dorottya Udvaros

Edith

Roberto Pollak

Isaac Partnoi

André Chaumeau

Etienne Tailleux

François Delaive

Thomas

Etienne Chicot

Toushka

Michael Kroecher

Cashier

Rita Scholl

Delfin van Delf

Johara Racz

Dancer

Erland Josephson

Jorge Picabia

10,765 feet

120 minutes

United Kingdom 1990**Director: Istvan Szabo**

● Zoltan Szanto, a conductor little-known outside his native Hungary, accepts an invitation to conduct Opera Europa in a performance of *Tannhäuser* to be broadcast by satellite to twenty-seven countries. Arriving in Paris, he is introduced to the opera administrators: Jorge Picabia, its Spanish director; Miss Malikoff, his assistant and the daughter of Russian nobility; and Jean Gabor, a fellow Hungarian with unfailingly bureaucratic instincts. He is surprised to find in the chorus, and representing the union, an old flame, Jana.

Gradually, he becomes disillusioned by the work practices he confronts. Not only is his initial address to his cast about his reading of the opera fragmented beyond comprehension by informal simultaneous translation into several languages, but he is unable to rehearse effectively due to union rules. He also finds his pay endlessly delayed. He takes a dislike to his diva, Karin Anderson, and during a rehearsal his patience snaps; he launches into an improvised song of protest and is taken aback when she lustily joins in.

Soon they are romantically involved, and when she goes to Budapest for a concert, he contrives to join her. Zoltan's wife Edith learns of the affair and threatens to throw him out. But despite Karin's efforts to end the affair, Zoltan persists in his infatuation. As the opening approaches, disasters multiply. The set designer takes an overdose of heroin; Jana is rushed pregnant to hospital; and the picketing of an environmental group proves obstructive.

The audience assembles, but the company finds they are unable to raise the safety curtain: a technicians' strike has been called. As the audience grows restless, Karin suggests they give a concert performance in front of the curtain: their passion will make up for lack of sets. This they do, and all differences are subsumed in the magnificence of Wagner's music and the artistry and devotion of the performers.

● *Meeting Venus*, which falls into the 'putting on a show' genre of Hollywood musical, also denies the genre by making this particular show a Wagnerian opera. It's a wilful challenge to mainstream Hollywood, in other words, its pleasures not instantly available and not necessarily available to all (there are some nice jibes at the vulgarity of modern opera set design and choreography). It is also a talky film, the thoughts of the protagonist

rendered through a voice-over delivering letters he writes, or only thinks of writing, to his wife.

David Puttnam, whose show this very much is, has said that he hoped the film, which grew out of a conversation he had with Istvan Szabo about the latter's own experiences of directing an internationally cast opera in Paris, might stand as a sort of blueprint for a new European cinema. It comes at a key moment for the British film industry, as it hovers between providing a beach-head for Hollywood's further penetration of Europe or, optimistically, the reverse.

Istvan Szabo was, tactically, a good choice of director – with his Oscar for *Mephisto* and his previous films, *Confidence*, *Colonel Redl* and *Hanussen*, dedicated to exploring the moral dilemmas at the heart of being a European. He has brought with him his regular collaborator, cinematographer Lajos Koltai, who conjures everywhere, from the bleak architecture of international airports to the warm, ornate spaces of the opera house (Budapest's State Opera doubling for Paris), an atmosphere heavy with intimations of seduction, disorder and disaster that is worthy of Powell-Pressburger's *Red Shoes*. Gradually, Opera Europa is revealed to harbour not only the residue of acrimony left by Europe's fraught history, but the crippling detritus of a socialist-inspired bureaucracy, in which union rules prevent Szanto from ever rehearsing chorus and orchestra together.

At the climax, Wagner's opera itself is pressed into 'speaking for' that moment when the gates to East Europe opened, as the chorus troop movingly down the theatre's central aisle. In the production notes, it is also suggested that the plight of the Wagnerian hero, forced to choose between the profane love offered by Venus and the sacred embodied by Elizabeth, parallels that of Szanto himself, caught between Karin and his quotidian affection for Edith.

Had this been explored, it would have articulated the larger question of "how we should live, with whom and why", as Szanto puts it in his speech on the *Tannhäuser* theme. That this doesn't happen is largely due to the miscasting of Glenn Close as Karin (which illustrates all too clearly the perils of international film production). At one point Karin refers to herself as, by (false) reputation, a cold fish. Nowhere, however, does she disprove this evaluation by convincing as either object, or subject, of desire. The film fails to achieve the Powell-like obsessiveness needed to lift it above merely acute, telling and finely registered observation.

Verina Glaessner

Certificate
12
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Applied Action
For Warner Bros
Producer
Robert K. Weiss
Associate Producer
John D. Schofield
Production Associates
Joseph Bookchin
Catherine Cederquist
Angi Neff
Peter Dudar
Alisa Statman
Unit Production Manager
John D. Schofield
Location Manager
Pam O'Hara
2nd Unit Directors
Robert Stevens
Jim Arnett
Casting
Marion Dougherty
Sharon Howard-Field
Associate: Susan Peck
Assistant Directors
Jim Van Wyck
Princess McLean
2nd Unit:
John Kretschmer
Garry Brown
Brian Fong
Nancy Green
Screenplay
Dan Aykroyd
Story
Peter Aykroyd
Director of Photography
Dean Cundey
Colour
Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography
Robert Stevens
Don Burgess
Camera Operators
Raymond Stella
B: George Loomis
2nd Unit:
Allan Easton
Joe Thibo
Michael Ferris
Opticals Consultant
Bruce Block
Matte Artist
Ken Marshall
Graphics Design
John Daveikis
Editors
Malcolm Campbell
James Symons
Production Designer
William Sandell
Set Design
James Tocci
Set Decorator
Michael Taylor
Special Effects Supervisor
Michael Lantieri
Special Effects Forman
Donald Elliott
Special Effects
Tom Pakh
Daniel Ossello
Brian Tipton
Mark Noel
Bruce Minkus
Bryson Gerard
Joss Geiduschek
Louie Lantieri
Scott Fisher
Ron Goldstein
Jon Porter
Eric Rylander
Kim Derry
Miniatures
Apogee Productions
Music
Michael Kamen
Music Extracts
"Theme from the Black Hole" by George Clinton, Jim Vitti, J.S. Theracon, Boots Collins, performed by Parliament; "I'm in the Mood for Love (Moody's Mood)" by Jimmy McHugh, Dorothy Fields

Orchestrations
Michael Kamen
Philip Giffin
Nick Batzdorf
Jack Hayes
William Ross
Supervising Music Editor
Christopher S. Brooks
Songs
"The Good Life" by Jack Reardon, Sacha Distel, performed by Ray Charles; "Same Song" by Greg Jacobs, Ron Brooks, 2 Pac Shakur, "Tie the Knot" by Greg Jacobs, performed by digital underground; "Bonestrripper" by Jack Blades, Tommy Shaw, Ted Nugent, performed by Damn Yankees; "La Chanka" by Peter Aykroyd, José Pedro Beledo, performed by Bertila Damas; "Atlantic City (Is a Party Town)" by Peter Aykroyd, performed by Elwood Blues Revue; "Get Over" by Madonna, Stephen Bray, performed by Nick Scotti; "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Bob Crewe, Bob Gaudio, performed by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons; "I Mean I Love You" by and performed by Hank Williams Jr.; "Garden in the Rain" by Carrol Gibbons, James Dyrenforth, performed by Blue Barron; "She's a Great, Great Girl" by Harry Woods, performed by Jack Teagarden; "Wabash Cannonball" by A. P. Carter, performed by Doc Watson; "Helen Claire" by and performed by Michael Kamen
Costume Design
Deborah Nadoolman
Costume Supervisors
Mort Schwartz
Sandra Berke Jordan
Silvio Scarano
Make-up Artists
Robert Ryan
Lee Harmon
Jim Scribner
Ben Nye Jr
Nadege Schoenfeld
Character Supervisor:
Mike Elizade
Dan Aykroyd/
John Daveikis:
David B. Miller
Title Design
Douy Swofford
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editor
Lon E. Bender
Sound Editors
Frank Smathers
Stuart Copley
Dan Hegeman
Neal Burger
Ascher Yates
Cliff Latimer
ADR Supervisor
Avram D. Gold
ADR Editors
Devon Curry
Jim Borgardt
Foley Supervisor
Sukei Fontelieu
Sound Recordists
Don H. Matthews
Music:
Stephen P. McLaughlin
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Andy Nelson
Robert Glass
Tom Perry
Lon E. Bender
Foley Artists
Dan O'Connell
Alicia Stevenson
Gary Hecker
Stunt Co-ordinator
Phil Adams
Stunts
Phil Adams
John Robotham
Victoria Vanderkloot
Bob Elmore
Marian Green
Maria Kelly
Peter McKernan
Sonia Ryusaki
Stephanie Epper
Bill McIntosh
Jeff Ramsey
Al Wyatt Jr
Bud George Davis
Bennie Moore
Don Pulford
Jim Arnett
Rex Pierson
Clark Boss
Mark Stefanich
Debby Lynn Ross
Cast
Chevy Chase
Chris Thorne
Dan Aykroyd
JP/Bobo
John Candy
Dennis/Eldona Purdah
Demi Moore
Diane Lightson
Valri Bromfield
Miss Purdah
Taylor Negron
Fausto Squirinisz
Bertila Damas
Renalda Squirinisz
Raymond J. Barry
Mark
Brian Doyle-Murray
Brian
John Wesley
Sam
Peter Aykroyd
Mike the Doorman
Daniel Baldwin
James Staskel
Dealers
Deborah Lee Johnson
Karla Tamburrelli
Dealers' Girlfriends
John Daveikis
Li'l Debbull
Earl Dixon
Danielle Aykroyd
P.H. Aykroyd
Richard Kruk
Robert K. Weiss
Porch People
Laurence Bilzerian
Isaac Tigrett
Town Bikers
Catherine Quinn
Ron Ulstad
Paul LeClair
Partygoers
Stan Garner
Train Master
James Clark
Train Engineer
Jeffrey P. Baggett
Kristina Kochoff
Gary Velasco
State Troopers
Roger Grimsby
TV Anchor
Susan Campos
TV Reporter
Humpty Hump
Shock-G
Money-B
Fuze
Chopmaster-J
2 Pac Shakur
Kent Racker
Nzazi Muhammed
Schmoovy-Schmoov
digital underground
Karen Crony
D'Andrea Bryant
Jennifer Van Buskirk
Gianna Amore
Party Girls

8,377 feet
93 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Dan Aykroyd

Chris Thorne, a New York financial journalist, and his attractive new neighbour, lawyer Diane Lightson, arrange to drive to Atlantic City for a business reception. Fausto and Renalda Squirinisz, Brazilian clients, invite themselves along for the drive, and persuade Chris to take a scenic detour from the freeway. After Chris has partially ignored a stop sign in the desolate village of Valkenvania, his passengers egg him on to speed away from the local police, who nevertheless catch up with him.

Dennis Purdah and his female cousin, both cops, take the New Yorkers before the 106-year-old justice of the peace, Alvin Valkenheiser, who still has a grudge against bankers because a sharp operator duped his family while he was away in World War I and turned Valkenvania into a strip-mined toxic waste dump. Because of a legal loophole, Valkenvania has a feudal system, and the judge can indulge his whims. While the New Yorkers are stuck overnight in the cellar, the judge sentences a group of more obnoxious speeders to death, feeding them into Mr Bonestripper, a fairground execution device.

Discovering that thousands of people have 'disappeared' in Valkenvania over the last hundred years, the New Yorkers try to escape, and the Brazilians successfully bribe Dennis to allow them to go free. When a rap group are brought before the bench, the judge lets them off because he likes music, although he calls upon them to witness the wedding of Chris to his mute granddaughter Eldona, while Diane falls into the hands of Bobo and Li'l Debbull, adult-sized babies.

Chris escapes, and rescues Diane from an execution machine,



Honourable role: Dan Aykroyd

hopping on a train to get free of Valkenvania. Returning to the town with the National Guard, Chris and Diane discover that the state authorities have tolerated and encouraged the judge's methods of dealing with crime. However, a mine fire that has been burning since the 20s flares up, and the town is destroyed. Back in New York, Chris sees the judge on a television news report about the disaster, declaring that his entire family has been made homeless and will have to move in with his grandson-in-law.

In recent years, the *Saturday Night Live/National Lampoon* generation of comedians have mainly opted to appear in bland formula vehicles. *Nothing But Trouble* – filmed as *Valkenvania* – at least manages to hark back to the self-indulgent but unpredictable days of 1941 and *The Blues Brothers*, when being funny, much less obeying the notional rules of the 'well-made film', came a long way down the list of film-making priorities. *Trouble* combines absolute failure as a comedy with a surprisingly interesting and disgusting vision of grotesque Americana.

The stars – Chase, Candy and Aykroyd, either blandly reprising established personae or buried under *Dick Tracy*-style make-up effects – invariably fall as flat as the conventional jokes. There are further miscalculations, like the inclusion of a pointless rap interlude, with Aykroyd's monstrous JP joining the group digital underground on a *Phantom of the Opera*-style pump organ, and an ending that straggles on through three or four finales.

However, there is a very real sense of the bizarre at work. Judge Valkenheiser, a 'Shire Reeve' under a legal system that predates the Magna Carta, is a truly disgusting creation, with a false nose that sometimes resembles a penis covering a war wound, and a crumbling lair outfitted with Heath Robinson devices. Equally, the giant babies are genuinely disturbing and unpleasant creations, and Aykroyd films them with an unflinching griminess that is comparable to the monstrous retards of the rural massacre cycle of the 70s.

Ultimately, the self-contained world of Valkenvania – with literal heaps of human bones, Kafkaesque fairground execution devices, automobile stonehenge, and collection of inbred monstrosities – is a nightmare community in an honourable tradition, half-way between the Munsters and the Addams Family on the one hand, and Tobe Hooper's cannibal cook-out and Wes Craven's mutant-plagued hills on the other.

Kim Newman

Paris Trout



Unsettled: Dennis Hopper, Barbara Hershey...

Certificate
18
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production Company
Viacom Pictures
Executive Producer
Diana Kerew
Producers
Frank Konigsberg
Larry Sanitsky
Associate Producer
Jayne Bieber
Production
Co-ordinator
Alison Deen
Unit Production
Manager
Tom Luse
Location Manager
Carri L. Gibbs
Casting
Chez Casting
Shay Griffin
Additional:
Jason LaPadura
Extras:
Cynthia Stillwell
Assistant Directors
David Womark
Brenda Kalosh
Screenplay
Pete Dexter
Based on his
own novel
Director of
Photography
Robert Elswit
Colour
CFI
Camera Operator
Ed Myers
Editor
Harvey Rosenstock
Additional:
Angelo Corrao
Production Designer
Richard Sherman
Set Decorator
Michael Warg
Set Dresser
Jack Evans
Special Effects
Bob Shelley
Music
David Shire
Music Editor
Noteworthy Inc

Costume Design
Mary Rose
Wardrobe
Supervisor
Rebecca Schaefer
Make-up
Susan "Sam" Mayer
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Supervising
Sound Editor
Dave Weathers
Sound Recordist
Mary H. Ellis
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Gary Bourgeois
Magic Moreno
Andrew B. Napell
Post-production
Sound Effects
Todd-AO/Glen Glenn
Production
Assistants
Brumby Boylston
Stu Dodge
Eric L. Morton
Set:
Howell Caldwell
Stunt Co-ordinator
Lonnie Smith

Cast
Dennis Hopper
Paris Trout
Barbara Hershey
Hanna Trout
Ed Harris
Harry Seagraves
Ray McKinnon
Carl Bonner
Tina Lifford
Mary Sayers
Darnita Henry
Rosie Sayers
Eric Ware
Henry Ray Sayers
Ronreaco Lee
Chester Sayers
Gary Bullock
Buster Devonne
Sharlene Ross
Mother Trout's Nurse
Jim Peck
Estes Singletary
Dan Biggers
Mayor Harn
Ernest Dixon
Truck Driver
Wallace Wilkinson
Dr Brewer
Ronn Leggett
Glass Man
Ed Grady
Judge Travis
Muriel Moore
Nurse
Georgia Allen
Seagraves' Maid
Rebecca Wackler
Woman Shopper
David Dwyer
Policeman
Danny Nelson
Chief Fixx
Phil Roper
Gas Station Attendant
Ted Manson
Hotel Clerk
Dan Albright
Bruce Evers
Reporters
Harrison Avery Jr
Preacher
Robin Florence
Receptionist
Suzanne Stewart
Elderly Woman
Mary Marshall Neri
Mother Trout

8,913 feet
99 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Stephen Gyllenhaal

● 1949. In a small town in Ether County, Georgia, Hanna Trout, once a schoolteacher, has made what has turned out to be a mistaken marriage to local store owner and loan broker Paris Trout, who lives by his own unyielding business code. Hanna defies Trout to take a young black girl, Rosie Sayers, who has been bitten by a possibly rabid fox, to the doctor. Trout meanwhile sells a car on terms to Rosie's elder brother Henry Ray, but when the car is involved in an accident, and turns out to be rusted through, the outraged youth returns it to Trout.

Shortly afterwards, Trout storms out to the Sayers' house, with ex-policeman Buster Devonne, to demand his overdue payment. Henry Ray flees, but the two men fatally shoot Rosie and wound her mother Mary. When subsequently visited by his lawyer, Harry Seagraves, Trout denies responsibility for the shootings, invoking his right to collect his debt. He has said nothing to Hanna, whom he suspects of trying to poison him, and when he hears that she has been to the hospital to see Rosie Sayers' body, he half-drowns her in the bath to convince her not to undermine his position.

Trout remains truculent when questioned by prosecutor Carl Bonner ("Somebody got shot - they did it themselves"), sure that no jury in town will convict him. Seagraves prepares his defence, though with mounting doubts: he is sick when he sees the bloodstains in the Sayers home. Hanna attends Rosie's burial, and when she returns is sexually assaulted with a bottle by the increasingly unhinged Trout. Hanna bolts herself inside her bedroom, and Trout sets about turning his part of the house into a fortress, laying glass across the bedroom floor and destroying all the food. Hanna cuts herself on broken glass and is tended by Seagraves; though clearly attracted to her, he still asks her not to do anything to hurt her husband's case.

During the course of the trial, however, she and Seagraves become lovers. Trout is found guilty of manslaughter, but no sooner is he delivered to prison than a bribe to local officials frees him. He returns to town, where he is ignored but tolerated, locked inside his delusions, visiting his silent, immobilised mother in an old people's home. Hanna and Seagraves are living happily together as the town's sesquicentennial celebrations get underway. But Trout chooses that day to take his mother out of the home, and in a hotel room overlooking the parade he first shoots her then

threatens Hanna. Seagraves is killed when he comes to the rescue, and Trout then turns the gun on himself.

● Befitting a film about the South - as if it must automatically fall into the genre of Southern Gothic - there are many ghosts at large in *Paris Trout*. The trouble with Pete Dexter's adaptation of his own novel, in the main a neat, intelligent transposition, neatly, atmospherically handled by first-time director Stephen Gyllenhaal, is that he has multiplied them rather than delivering the shiver of an essential haunting.

It's a problem, first of all, of voice. The novel has a dry, objective way of confronting all these self-generating absurdities of behaviour - generated perhaps by the 'peculiar' condition of the South - which Dexter defines through an intricate small-town network, less immediately peculiar than the social relationships of, say, Flannery O'Connor. But Dexter has given the film a different voice, a first-person voice-over from Paris Trout's wife Hanna, which immediately sends us looking in the wrong direction for the story's meaning. At the outset, Hanna announces that in the spring of 1949, an epidemic of rabies broke out in Ether County, Georgia, and after a subsequent episode in which a fourteen-year-old black girl is bitten by a possibly rabid fox, she concludes, "And that was how it all started - a little girl named Rosie Sayers and a fox".

It's a curious statement, for a number of reasons. One of the themes of Southern Gothic is that it is impossible to say where individual tragedies start, that the most bizarre aberrations are understood to have their beginnings in history, slavery, family, the Civil War (a point *Paris Trout* comes to by the end). And after Rosie has ►



...Ed Harris

Reviews

Nothing But Trouble
Paris Trout

◀ been fatally shot by Trout, the rabies epidemic is never mentioned again. Nor is it in the novel; but there we have not been set up to think of it as a metaphor for racism, for the social poison whose end product – and a man infected by the paranoid fear of being poisoned – is Paris Trout.

Hanna's voice-over continues throughout the film, sometimes subjective – "I knew in some way he had brought news about me, too", she says of lawyer Seagraves' first visit after Trout's murders – sometimes objective, as when Trout himself and his last victims are laid to rest: "It's the oldest lesson of the South – it's easier to bury than to forget". The effect is oddly to suggest that she is both the emotional centre of the story and yet somehow outside it, perhaps an outsider to the town and its attitudes, recording in hindsight their impact on her as she passed through. Neither is true, which makes for dramatic confusion, although the main purpose of the voice-over is clearly to do some narrative tidying-up.

There is such an outsider in the novel, the new wife of a young lawyer, who also becomes a Trout victim. But her unhappiness, and her husband's embarrassment over her presence, are simply part of the pattern, the pattern that Trout exemplifies and has given a crazy twist to. Her perspective doesn't explain Trout. By trying to condense the members of this social network, Dexter has set up too many ways of taking them, has made of Hanna Trout in particular an impossible figure neither inside nor outside events. To an extent, Gyllenhaal compensates by making such a perfect ensemble of the lead performances, with Hopper, Barbara Hershey and Ed Harris becoming a microcosm of a society that can no longer be comfortable with itself after one outrageous act has revealed what it is ("The meaning of what happened will not settle", as Seagraves worries during the trial).

Gyllenhaal also successfully keeps other ghosts at bay. As the director of a *Twin Peaks* episode, he has eschewed any Lynchian 'weirdness', and encouraged Hopper to eschew the *Blue Velvet* band of his craziness. Hopper in fact is hypnotic as the battened-down, beetle-browed Trout, whose integrity is his madness, his utter self-conviction whether committing murder, sexual abuse or suicide, his every act justified by his business ethic ("You want something, you give something up"). It's a performance that belongs in a film with a clearer vision: John Huston's *Wise Blood*, which was consistently straight, objective and pellucid about one of the most twisted forms of madness ever put on the screen.

Richard Combs

Poison



Sex as disease?

Certificate
18
Distributor
Mainline
Production Company
Bronze Eye
Executive Producers
James Schamus
Brian Greenbaum
Producer
Christine Vachon
Associate Producer
Lauren Zalaznick
Production Co-ordinator
Lorraine Traverson
Production Manager
Lauren Zalaznick
Location Manager
Andy Fair
Casting
Andrew Harpending
Karim Ainouz
Laura Barnett
John Kelsey
Assistant Directors
Christine Vachon
Andrew Harpending
Mark Haffner
Screenplay
Todd Haynes
Director of Photography
Maryse Alberti
Part in colour
Black-and-white
Camera Work
Barry Ellsworth
Editors
James Lyons
Todd Haynes
Production Designer
Sarah Stollman
Art Director
Chas Plummer
Set Design
John Hansen
Set Dressers
Matthew Ebert
Jim Collier
Music
James Bennett
Music Director
Peter Golub
Costume Design
Jessica Haston
Wardrobe
Supervisor
Julie Lindner
Key Dresser
Kelly Reichardt
Make-up Artist
Angela Johnson
Special Make-up Effects
Scott Sliger
Titles/Opticals
Freeman Film Arts
Sound Editor
Mary Ellen Porto
Sound Recordists
Neil Danziger
Reilly Steele
Key Production Assistants
Colin Dodd
Shawn Haynes
Dana Liebert

Production Assistants
Terry Anderson
Ilyse Carter
Tom Donahue
Phil Harrison
Jan Hecht
Matt James
Nicole Kochman
Jim Kraning
Paul Likens
Keith Lustofin
Dani Michaeli
Hannah Neufeld
Rogelio
Jeff Schwartz
Paul Seidman
Matthew Sigal
Fred B. Smith
David Wilentz
Wardrobe:
Stephen Morrison
Susan Friedman
Art:
Nils Kenaston
Mike Taylor

Cast
Hero:
Edith Meeks
Felicia Beacon
Millie White
Millie Sklar
Buck Smith:
Gregory Lazar
Anne Giotta
Evelyn McAlpert
Lydia Lafleur:
Sylvia Manning
Ian Nemser:
Sean White
Rob LaBelle:
Jay Wete
Evan Dunsy:
Doctor MacArthur
Marina Lutz:
Hazel Lampercht
Barry Cassidy:
Officer Rilt
Richard Anthony:
Edward Comascho
Angela M. Schreiber:
Florence Giddons
Justin Silverstein:
Jake
Chris Singh:
Chris
Edward Allen:
Fred Beacon
Carlos Jimenez:
José

Homo:
Scott Renderer
John Broom
James Lyons
Jack Bolton
John R. Lombardi:
Rass
Tony Pemberton:
Young John Broom
Andrew Harpending:
Young Jack Bolton
Tony Gigante:
Inspector
Douglas F. Gibson
Van Roven
Damien Garcia:
Chanci

Les Simpson:
Miss Tim
Joey Grant:
Jamoke
Gary Ray:
Canon
David Danford:
Basco
Jason Bauer:
Doran
Ken Schatz:
Preacher
Maurice Clapissou:
Matthew Ebert
Marie-Françoise Vachon:
Foster Mother
Michael Silverman:
Foster Father
Shawn Wilson:
John Broom, age 6
Gideon Joslyn Brown:
John Connolly
Tom Cross:
Eric Cubano
Dani Michaeli:
Inmates
Jim Fletcher:
Tom Wayland
Norman Yugutta:
Background Voices

Horror:
Larry Maxwell:
Doctor Graves
Susan Norman:
Nancy Olsen
Al Quagliata:
Deputy Hansen
Michelle Sullivan:
Prostitute
Parlan McGaw:
Newscaster
Frank O'Donnell:
Old Doctor
Melissa Brown:
Joe Dietl
Man and Woman in the Alley
Don Damico:
Doctor/Cop
Charles Cavalier:
Cop
Kyle deCamp:
Aimee Scheff
Neighbours
Jessica Lorraine Traverson:
Nurses
Phil W. Petrie:
Doctor
Jim Cagnard:
Bartender
Lauren Zalaznick:
Waitress
Chris Henricks:
Sleazy Man
Leah Mullen:
Elyse Steinberg
Little Girls
Bruce Cook:
Doctor Strick
Andrew Bishop:
Child's Hands
Tom McCullough:
Chaya Tiger
Jack Tiger:
Frankie Waters
Townspeople
Richard Hansen:
Narrator
Gary Ray:
Melissa Brown
Don Damico:
Joe Glick
Additional Voices

7,693 feet
85 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Todd Haynes

● *Hero.* An American suburb: interviews with neighbours and acquaintances investigate the story of seven-year-old Richie Beacon, who killed his father and then, according to his mother Felicia, flew away. Richie's schoolmates and teachers express their bewilderment at the boy and his way of arousing instant animosity. Felicia says that her son was "an angel of judgment", and tells how the boy came home one day to find her in bed with the family gardener. Later, discovering her affair, her husband attacked her, and Richie took his father's gun and shot him, before flying out the window.

Homo. As a boy, John Broom is caught stealing. As an adult prison inmate, he recalls idyllic scenes of homosexual love in the reformatory where he spent his youth. A new inmate in Broom's tough prison is Jack Bolton, whom he knew earlier, and for whom he feels a renewed passion. Broom and Bolton develop a tender relationship, but Broom begins to feel jealous about the attentions shown Bolton by other prisoners (including the tough convict Rass), and they argue. A fight between them culminates in Broom raping Bolton. Broom remembers watching a scene in the reformatory in which Bolton was spat at and humiliated by other boys. One night, Bolton is killed as he makes an escape attempt with Rass.

Horror. Dr Graves is researching the mysteries of the sex drive, but his theories are rejected by an angry scientific establishment. Having isolated the sex drive as a serum in his laboratory, he is visited by Nancy Olsen, a young colleague; distracted, he accidentally drinks the serum. His body beginning to mutate, Graves kills a woman he meets in a bar; a police hunt for the "Leper Sex Killer" begins. Nancy is at first horrified by Graves' transformation, but accepts him and offers her love. Outside, she tries to pretend that all is normal, but bystanders flee the now horribly mutated Graves. A television story announces that an epidemic has started, and Nancy realises that she too has been affected. She subsequently dies, and Graves is pursued by the police. Besieged at his flat, he addresses the waiting crowd before jumping to his death.

● Conceived in tribute to the writings of Jean Genet, *Poison* is a film about deviance, with deviance encoded in its structure. Its three stories are interwoven, but without any apparent overlap or connection between them. Each has a visual style and a clear narrative of its own; and each takes place in

its own separate fictional world. The 'Hero' section is set in an archetypal mid-American suburb, recorded *vérité* fashion, at least until its final primal confrontation; the black-and-white 'Horror' section takes place in a stylised urban setting that seems anachronistically stuck between the present and a remembered B-movie 1950s; and the supposedly American setting of 'Homo' seems a direct translation of Genet's Europe, switching between a mediaevally grim prison and a 20s pastoral of innocent sexuality. The three fictional worlds have little in common except their varying degrees of indeterminacy; together, they define an imaginative non-space, an atopia of desire and transgression.

Despite the invocation of Genet, only the prison story seems to relate directly to his work. Caught stealing as a boy, Broom - like Genet in his autobiographical *Thief's Journal* - accepts the name 'thief' and makes rejection his very *raison d'être*. Broom's is a world defined by exclusion on many levels - the gay criminal's from the legalistic order, and the exclusion that exists within the prison itself, with its distinctions between 'masculine' and 'feminine' sexuality at once fixed and open to slippage. Thus, Broom, apparently the very image of the hardened macho lag, is thrown off-balance by the change in the formerly delicate Bolton, whose new hard-man stature and highly charged sexuality threaten to destabilise Broom's sense of self. A desire based on role-playing and role-exchange within the prison's rigidly codified world is beset with traps; in this respect, Todd Haynes does more justice to Genet's perverse slippages than Fassbinder did in his burlesque *Querelle*.

The film's most accessible section is its gruesome skit on 50s horror which, in its command of pop-culture clichés, echoes Haynes' short *Superstar*, in which Barbie dolls enacted the life of anorexic singer Karen Carpenter. As well as the 50s horror genre in general, the story refers explicitly to David Cronenberg's re-reading of it in *The Fly*, and the the body of criticism that took that film as an AIDS parable. But 'Horror' is less about AIDS than about the tendency - both of the media in general, and of the horror genre in particular - to stigmatise illness as an object of horror. This is a narrative not about sex as disease, but about popular culture's reinforcement of the myth of sex as disease. The fact that it operates as very broad parody allows it to deflate those assumptions that Cronenberg's *The Fly* tended to reinforce even while questioning them.

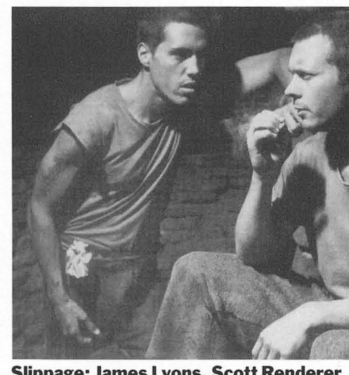
'Hero' is perhaps the most fascinating section by virtue of its

elusiveness. Even though it is cast in the language of the TV news report, it effectively resists reading. How does this domestic anecdote relate to the two other stories of sexuality, and what is the mystery surrounding Richie? His function as missing piece in the narrative jigsaw that refuses to cohere around him is to reveal the hesitations of others, drawing out their bewilderment (like that of the horrified neighbour in whose yard he defecates), and their unarticulated desires (of the schoolmate he has apparently 'seduced' into a spanking game, and of his mother, whose religious fervour is fuelled by a mythomania that draws on Richie's own ability to generate narratives). In the context of a 'healthy' suburbia, Richie is 'poisonous', a purgative influence.

The film's construction tends to encourage a reading of the three narratives as being separate, and it is only towards the end that a faster cutting speed between them encourages a stronger sense of parallelism. But the film fosters this sense of separateness in order to maintain a *suspended* possibility of comparison between the three. The narratives are only conflated at the beginning and the end, and the initial links are far from self-evident. In the opening subjective shot, the police raid a house and pursue someone out of the window (subsequent events reveal this to be Graves); the story of Richie is then recounted; then, in the title sequence, a boy's hand explores various objects in the dark, before threatening adults appear to accuse him of theft.

Although these scenes belong to three different narratives, they are initially perceived as one - all three heroes are caught at the moment they are named as object of pursuit (Graves), of investigation (Richie), of justice (Broom). *Poison* contents itself with suggesting that the three are one, but refuses to comment further on that insight. It is left to the viewer's desire for meaning - a desire that would perhaps be as perverse as those which Haynes' three stories address - to establish exactly what their relationship might be.

Jonathan Romney



Slippage: James Lyons, Scott Renderer

Regarding Henry



Selves assured: Harrison Ford, Annette Bening

Certificate

12

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Paramount

Executive Producer

Robert Greenhut

Producers

Scott Rudin

Mike Nichols

Co-producer

Jeffrey Abrams

Associate Producer

Susan MacNair

Production

Co-ordinators

Helen Robin

Michele Imperato

Production Manager

Joseph Hartwick

Location Managers

Jonathan Filley

Ken Lavet

Casting

Juliet Taylor

Ellen Lewis

Extras:

Todd Thaler Casting

L.A. Casting Express

Associates:

Judie Fixler

Laura Rosenthal

Assistant Directors

Michael Haley

Glen Trotiner

Screenplay

Jeffrey Abrams

Director of

Photography

Giuseppe Rotunno

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operator

Giovanni Fiore

Coltellacci

Steadicam Operator

Craig DiBona

Opticals

The Effects House

Corporation

Video Technicians

Bob Balzarini

Bradford Ralston

Editor

Sam O'Steen

Production Designer

Tony Walton

Art Directors

Dan Davis

William Elliott

Set Decorators

Susan Bode

Amy Marshall

Cindy Carr

Set Dressers

Dave Weinman

Kristen Kelley

Master Scenic

Artists

Richard Ventre

Enrico Paronelli

Music

Hans Zimmer

Music Extracts

"Piano Concerto No.21

in C Major" by

Wolfgang Amadeus

Mozart, performed

by Camerata

Labacensis, conducted

by Kurt Redel

Music Performed by

Vocals:

Bobby McFerrin

Orchestrations

Bruce Fowler

Music Editors

Suzana Peric

Suki Buchman

Songs

"Walking on the

Moon" by Sting,

performed by

The Police

Costume Design

Ann Roth

Wardrobe

Men's Supervisors:

Benjamin Wilson

Bruce Erickson

Women's Supervisors:

Melissa Stanton

Cheryl Beasley-

Blackwell

Make-up

Supervisor:

J. Roy Helland

Artist:

Joseph Campayno

Titles

Balsmeyer

& Everett Inc

Sound Editors

Stan Bochner

Stuart Emanuel

ADR Editor

Michael Jacobi

Sound Recordists

James Sabat

Gene Cantamessa

Music:

Jay Rifkin

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Robert S. Warren

Sound Re-recordist

Lee Dichter

Technical Advisers

Dr Bruce Volpe

Dr Richard Fraser

Dr Robert Nichols

Tom Frost

Rita Kraut

Karen Ulfig

Stunt Co-ordinator

Peter Bucossi

Cast

Harrison Ford

Henry Turner

Annette Bening

Sarah Turner

Bill Nunn

Bradley

Mikki Allen

Rachel Turner

Donald Moffat

Charlie

Aida Linares

Rosella

Elizabeth Wilson

Jessica

Robin Bartlett

Phyllis

Bruce Altman

Bruce

Rebecca Miller

Linda Palmer

R. M. Haley

Court Clerk

Stanley H. Swerdlow

Mr Matthews

Julie Follansbee

Mrs Matthews

John MacKay

George

Mary Gilbert

Julia

Peter Appel

Doorman

Harsh Nayyar

Store Owner

John Leguizamo

Gunman

Harold House

Policeman

Cynthia Martells

ICU Nurse

James Rebhorn

Dr Sultan

Brian Smiar

Dr Marx

May Quigley

Hillary

Marjorie Monaghan

Julie

Emily Wachtel

Gloria

Kai Soremekun

Loretta

Suzann O'Neill

Real Estate Broker

Glen Trotiner

Elevator Man

Jeffrey Abrams

Delivery Boy

Jack McLaughlin

Taxi Driver

Louis Cantarini

Hot Dog Vendor

Kirby Mitchell

Rudy

William Severs

Mark Irish

Bernadette Penotti

Jim Gardner

Fred Fehrmann

Alva Chinn

Lawyers

Henry Stram

Waiter

Kia Graves

Jennifer

Benjamin

Hendrickson

Daniel

Susan Forristal

Brenda

Ralph Byers

Gerald

Joan Kindred

Party Guest

Hollis Granville

Butler

Anne Stone

Charlie's Secretary

9,685 feet

108 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Mike Nichols

New York attorney Henry Turner scores a major victory for his firm when he successfully defends a medical negligence suit brought by a diabetic, Mr Matthews, who claims he had revealed his condition before being treated, wrongly, in hospital. At home in his luxurious apartment, Henry lectures his daughter Rachel on responsibility (he and his wife Sarah have plans to send Rachel to an exclusive boarding-school). Going out later for cigarettes, Henry walks into a hold-up and is shot. He survives, but oxygen deprivation leaves him with total loss of memory, speech and motor skills.

At a rehabilitation clinic, he slowly regains physical control under the ebullient care of black therapist Bradley. Sarah meanwhile reassures his boss, Charlie, that he will soon be back to normal. Henry is eventually pushed by Bradley into trying to talk again, and pronounces the word 'ritz', whereupon he sets about a series of paintings of Ritz cracker boxes. Henry is reluctant to leave Bradley's care for people he feels he doesn't know - his wife and daughter - until he is reassured by Rachel. With her help, he also begins to read again, and nervously resumes his place in the office.

He is shocked, however, to discover evidence which had been suppressed that supports Mr. Matthews' claim, and at home is upset by the news of Rachel's imminent departure for boarding-school. At a party, he realises that his colleagues are laughing behind his back at his slowness and naivety, and he confesses to Bradley that he doesn't like the person he used to be.

From letters, Henry discovers that Sarah was having an affair with one of his colleagues, Bruce, before the shooting. He himself comes to realise that he was involved with someone else from the office, Linda, in twice-weekly assignations at the Ritz-Carlton hotel. Henry then delivers the suppressed evidence to Mrs Matthews, quits the firm, and with Sarah goes to reclaim Rachel from the boarding-school.

There's a peculiar auteur condition running through Mike Nichols' last two films: that of the director who is presented with thematically ideal material but who has lost the ideal way of dealing with it. In Nichols' case, this might be summarised as issues of being and seeming, essence and appearance, true consciousness and false consciousness - all of which are a gift in the Hollywood setting of *Postcards from the Edge* and the 'second chance' story of *Regarding Henry*.

Even the title's double meaning,

the objective and subjective ways of 'regarding' Henry, signals the two-minds motif, and a playful, ironic way of treating those issues that would have prevented the film from becoming the sentimental moral tale that it is. After a mugger's bullet has temporarily erased everything he has learned in life, Henry Turner wakes to discover that he no longer wants to be the man he was, a hot-shot attorney, but wants to become a better husband and father. As a medical treatment of the theme, *Regarding Henry* resembles *Silkwood*, in which the heroine suffers a physical misadventure - nuclear contamination - and becomes a different person in the process.

Of that film, Nichols has said, "You have to know your central image. I couldn't have made *Silkwood* if I didn't know ... that my story was in every scene *Silkwood* waking up, and trying to wake others". There's no such image in *Regarding Henry*, or rather it has become a naturalistic tinkering with Henry's environment, as a way of suggesting spiritual growth. To quote the production notes: "Director of photography Giuseppe Rotunno evoked subtle mood shifts through lighting - the steely harshness of the light in the film's earlier scenes gives way to a softer, brighter radiance as Henry's perceptions evolve. In addition, Rotunno allows for broader, wider shots in the Turner apartment ... mirroring Henry's gradual awakening".

The trouble with this kind of progression is that it allows for no irony about the way Henry swaps a supposedly false self for a real one, no sense of the dangerous instability of any identity. It certainly allows for no irony about how Henry, having cleaned up his personal act, will face other problems of social identity or status. Despite his wife's occasional financial twinges during his illness, it is not suggested how his world will be maintained after his climactic decisions about job and family.

Once upon a time, Nichols' images did suggest that instability, perhaps because the presentation of self was always theatrically 'framed' and overstated, carrying with it connotations of the artificial, of an infinite shuffle of roles. At the time, the director himself was still a man of the two media (two worlds, two minds). Then for eight years, Nichols was absent from the cinema, a period of uncertainty and confusion - akin to Henry's enforced absence and reconstruction? - which ended with *Silkwood*. Since his return, he has declared himself much more comfortable and confident as a filmmaker. Unfortunately, in confirming himself in that role, he has become less interesting as a director.

Richard Combs

Stanno tutti bene (Everybody's Fine)

Certificate

12

Distributor

Rank

Production Companies

Erre Produzioni

(Rome)/Les Films

Ariane/TFI Films

Production (Paris)

In collaboration

with Silvio Berlusconi

Communications

Executive Producer

Mario Cotrone

Producer

Angelo Rizzoli

Production Managers

Tullio Lullo

Paulo Piegia

Assistant Director

Giuseppe Giglietti

Screenplay

Giuseppe Tornatore

Tonino Guerra

Massimo De Rita

Story

Giuseppe Tornatore

Director of

Photography

Blasco Giurato

In colour

Camera Operator

Claudio Morabito

Editor

Mario Morra

Art Director

Andrea Crisanti

Set Design

Nello Giorgetti

Music

Ennio Morricone

Song

"Dream Theme" by

Andrea Morricone

Costume Design

Beatrice Bordone

Make-up Artist

Maurizio Trani

Subtitles

Anne Brav

Cast

Marcello Mastroianni

Matteo Scuro

Michele Morgan

Woman on Train

Marino Cenna

Canio

Roberto Nobile

Guglielmo

Valeria Cavalli

Tosca

Norma Martelli

Norma

Antonella Attili

Matteo's Mother

Giorgio Libassi

Lo Piparo

Gioacchino Civiotti

Stationmaster

Nicola Di Pinto

Hotel Porter

Suzanna Schemmari

Angela Scuro

Salvatore Cascio

Little Alvaro

Fabio Iellini

Antonello

Leo Gullotta

Matteo Lo Piparo

Mariangela Randazzo

Gaia Restivo

Paride Zappala

Ennio Morricone

Jacques Perrin

Diego Gullo

Alberto Sironi

Cesare Barbetti

Giovanni Barbagallo

Cloris Brosca

Victor Cavallo

Roberto Ceccacci

Alessandro Cordova

Vittorio De Bisogno

Nicoletta Della Corte

Alessandra Falugi

Sylvie Fennec

Angelo Formica

Edoardo Fornaciari

Carmen Giardina

Lara Lari

Rodolfo Lodovigi

Margherita Mignemi

Aldo Minneci

Domenico Modica

Serafino Moncada

Riccardo Mosca

Luigi Nicolosi

Roberta Pacetti

Maria Punzo

Christopher

Thompson

Mariaconcetta Vigilia

11,335 feet

126 minutes

Subtitles

Italy/France 1990

Director: Giuseppe Tornatore

Matteo Scuro is a lowly civil servant and opera lover in the rural district of Castelvetro, Sicily. Tired of living alone and never being visited by any of his five sons and daughters, all of whom have busy and prosperous careers and have spread to the four corners of Italy, he suddenly decides to pay them a series of surprise visits. His ultimate goal is to gather all his children for a family meal at the same table again.

His first stop, in Naples, to find his son Alvaro, gives him an idea of the frustrations in store. Nobody has seen Alvaro, and there is always an answering machine on his number. From there, Matteo travels to the other big cities of Italy, to check on the fortunes of his other children. They are all pleased to see him and report their news of seemingly perfect careers and happy family lives. But the reality is very different: each of the children has failed to live up to Matteo's expectations, but they are afraid to tell him of their real predicament.

Canio, apparently on the brink of standing in (and winning) a local election, turns out to be a lowly speechwriter. Tosca, a top actress/model with a beautiful apartment in the centre of Florence, actually poses for underwear advertisements, has borrowed the exotic lodgings from an ex-boyfriend, and hides an illegitimate child. Norma walks grandly through the executive door of the telephone exchange to her high-powered job, but once out of sight joins her colleagues on the switchboard. And Guglielmo, the gifted musician constantly in demand and on tour, is the disillusioned and unexceptional bass drummer with the local orchestra. Finally, when only two sons turn up at the grand dinner, Matteo realises that he has been deceived, and worse, that Alvaro has committed suicide after battling with depression.

On the train back home, Matteo collapses, and his family is only reunited when they all gather round his hospital bed. Finally returning to Sicily, Matteo is asked by his old friend the stationmaster how the trip went, and pretends that all is well. He visits his wife's grave, to continue the conversation he has kept up throughout his travels, but cannot bring himself to tell her the truth. He tells her not to worry about the family: "Everybody's fine".

Giuseppe Tornatore's follow-up to the highly successful *Cinema Paradiso* reveals him in determinedly darker, more cynical

mood on the possibility of lifelong happiness, and on the various malaises of modern Italian life. In this slight tale of an elderly romantic casting a belated patriarchal eye over his brood, only to find deceit and disillusionment, Tornatore traipses all over his hero's "beautiful country" only to find it afflicted by shallowness, impatience, indecency and squalor.

Marcello Mastroianni, surely the current cinema's most convincing conveyor of the pathos of growing old, dominates the film as a lonely and foolish old man, all cunning impishness one moment and raging despair the next. It is a proud, touching performance ably supported by a cast which includes *Paradiso's* Salvatore (Totò) Cascio, and which - that film's detractors take note - never lapses into cute sentimentality. Less happily, Tornatore's visual backdrop to this simple story dips into some heavy pastiche, including Fellini-esque moments in which streets of bustling people suddenly freeze in counterpoint to the anguished Matteo, and a vivid dream sequence which, although strikingly shot, does little to embellish the narrative.

Most striking of all, perhaps, is the procession of images of Italy's most famous monuments in various stages of ugly decay: Milan's imposing cathedral all but obscured by barren building sites and cranes; sumptuous shots of the Spanish Steps in Rome which turn out to be a huge billboard poster; a portrait of the Mona Lisa smudged on a city pavement, the enigmatic smile turned wilfully into a plastic grin. It is not only the fate of his children which disillusion the essentially optimistic Matteo, but the state of the entire Italian mainland where, to a Sicilian at least, people really do live the smooth, affluent life of dreams.

But the illusion vs. reality theme isn't as banal as this might make it sound. The most dream-like sequence, a genuinely comic interlude when Matteo joins a group of pensioners on a day trip to the seaside at Rimini, turns out to be absolutely real, while the exquisite canopy of fireflies admired nostalgically by the old man can in fact be turned on and off by the ubiquitous remote-control button. Dreams may be all around us, suggests Tornatore, but can we always identify them? And how many of them have been built on foundations which do not bear any scrutiny at all? Perhaps it is indeed best never to find out, and to rely on the comfortable homilies of Matteo's final, plaintive reassurance to his dead wife.

Peter Aspden

Teen Agent

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Warner Bros
Executive Producer
Elliot Schick
Producers
Craig Zadan
Neil Meron
Associate Producer
David Coatsworth
Production Office
Co-ordinators
Martha-Marie Kleinhaus
Associate:
Heather Dear
Production Manager
David Coatsworth
Unit Managers
Michel Chauvin
2nd Unit:
Michel Guay
Location Managers
Roman Martyn
Carole Mondello
2nd Unit Director
Glenn Randall Jnr
Casting
Marion Dougherty
Sharon Howard-Field
Canada:
Nadia Rona
Vera Miller
LA Associate:
Owens Hill
NY Associate:
Kari Strom
Assistant Directors
Tony Lucibello
Sean Dwyer
Walter Gasparovic
2nd Unit:
Pierre Moule
Richard Friedman
Ron Mezey
Screenplay
Darren Star
Story
Fred Dekker
Director of Photography
Doug Milsome
Colour
Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography
John Stephens
Camera Operators
Julian Chojnacki
2nd Unit:
Bert Tougas
Special Visual Effects
Introvision
International
Supervisor:
William Mesa
Camera:
Michael Lawler
John Coats
John Mesa
Art Directors:
Tim Donahue
Dave Sharp
Editors
John F. Link
Additional:
Mark Stevens
Production Designer
Guy J. Comtois
Art Director
Real Proulx
Art Department Co-ordinator
Lisa Pharand
Set Decorators
Gilles Aird
Jean Kazemirchuk
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Martin Malivoire
Key Special Effects
Louis Craig
Special Effects
Antonio Vidosa
Pierre Rivard
Mario Dumont
Gilles Perreault
Thierry Craig
M. Kavanagh
Jacques Languois
Music
David Foster

Music Director/Orchestrator
William Ross
Music Extract
"Pomp and Circumstance"
by Edward Elgar
Synclavier
Programming/Arranger
Simon Franglen
Music Supervisor
Maureen Crowe
Supervising Music Editor
Jim Harrison
Songs
"If Looks Could Kill (No Turning Back)"
by Antonina Armato,
Danny Sembello,
performed by Glenn Medeiros; "Teach Me How to Dream"
by David Foster, Dean Pitchford, performed by Robin McAuley; "Better the Devil You Know" by Stock, Aitken, Waterman, performed by Kylie Minogue; "One Hot Country" by John Spinks, performed by The Outfield; "Loud Guitars, Fast Cars and Wild, Wild Livin'" by Gregg Fulkerson, Michael Spears, Richard Black, performed by Contraband; "All Is Fair" by Cy Curnin, James West-Oram, Adam Woods, Peter Greenall, Danny K. Brown, performed by The Fixx; "One Mo' Time" by Steve Brown, performed by Trixter; "My Saltine" by T. Ketter, M. Knight, K. Kyle, J. LeSte, K. Stevens, performed by Bang Tango; "Maybe This Time" by Rich Nevens, Dave Christenson, Brian Reign, performed by The Stabilizers; "Who Do You Love?" by John Holliday, Trevor Steel, John Christoforou, performed by The Escape Club
Costume Design
Mary McLeod
Wardrobe Supervisor
John Stowe
Key Make-up Artist
Donald Mowat
Supervising Sound Editor
Bill Phillips
Sound Editors
Don Hall
Kirk Schuler
Andy Kopetzky
Gene Corso
ADR Editor
Devon Curry
Foley Editors
Jeffrey Wilhoit
James Moriana
Sound Recordest
Don Cohen
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordests
Donald O. Mitchell
Michael Herbeck
Robert Beemer
Aerial Consultant
Ross Reynolds
Production Assistant
Paul Dupont
Stunt Co-ordinator
Glenn Randall Jnr
Stunts
Yves Cameron
Michael Scherer
Peter Cox
Pamela West
Christine McMahon
Robin Grathwol
Alison Reid

Yves Langlois
Jamie Jones
Ron Vanhart
Jimm Dunn
Branko Racki
Richard A. Parker
Hisham Zayed
Ken Quinn
Paul Rutledge
Dennis Christensen

Cast
Richard Grieco
Michael Corben
Linda Hunt
Ilsa Grunt
Roger Rees
Augustus Steranko
Robin Bartlett
Mrs Grober
Gabrielle Anwar
Mariska
Geraldine James
Vendetta Galante
Michael Siberry
Richardson
Carole Davis
Areola Canasta
Frederick Coffin
Lieutenant Colonel Larabee
Tom Rack
Zigfeld
Roger Daltrey
Blade
Oliver Dear
Kent
Cyndy Preston
Melissa Tyler
Michael Sineinikoff
Haywood
Travis Swords
Kelly
Gerry Mendicino
Herb
Fiona Reid
Marge
Michael Vinokur
Brad
Gene Mack
Agent Kramer
Jacques Tourangeau
Lefevre
Dominique Petin
Macha Grenon
Clerks
Claude Gasse
Imperious Stewardess
Isabelle Truchon
Pascale Devigne
First-class Stewardesses
Marie-Josée Gauthier
Coach Stewardess
Philip Spensley
Principal
Gordon Masten
Ludwig Krupp
Susan Dear
First-class Hostess
Armand Laroche
Doorman
Chip Chuipka
Gunman
Laurent Imbault
Croupier
David Francis
Englishman
Tedd Dillon
Imposter Driver
John Tench
Cell Guard
Bonfield Marcoux
Bus Driver
Jon Baggaley
Ian
William Dear
Bomb Tester
Paul Babeau
Rob Bazos
Michele DeMeo
Iris Gressy
Maxine Guess
Donny Lucas
Nancy McGiffert
Carolyn Raymond
Peter Shinkada
French Club

7,934 feet
88 minutes

USA 1991

Director: William Dear

Special agent Blade is killed while investigating the mysterious deaths of many international finance ministers. To protect Augustus Steranko, Chairman of the European Common Market, top-secret undercover agent Michael Corben is despatched to France. Ironically, Steranko is himself the culprit, planning to murder all Europe's leaders and create a new United European Empire.

En route, Corben is executed, but his flight carries another passenger bearing his name; a teenager on a school trip to Paris. On arrival, the young Michael Corben is intercepted by British intelligence, who transport him to a secret lair where, despite his protests, he is briefed for his mission and presented with several impressive accessories: x-ray spectacles; explosive chewing gum; sucker-shoes; and a fully customised sports car.

Michael meets Steranko at a lavish casino, where he uses his x-ray specs to beat him at cards. Steranko's mistress Areola Canasta botches an attempt to kill the teenager with a scorpion, and is destroyed in a rocket attack on Michael's room. Michael is then abducted by Mariska, Blade's beautiful daughter, who has uncovered Steranko's plot.

At Steranko's hideout, they witness Michael's school-friends being led into captivity before being taken prisoner themselves. Steranko's plan is to poison the European leaders gathered at his home for a summit, and blame their deaths on the 'terrorists' for which Michael and his friends will provide convenient corpses. But Michael uses his explosive gum to effect an escape, rescues his friends, and while Steranko is crushed attempting to flee by helicopter, uses his sucker-boots to carry Mariska to safety.

Although a youthful parody of James Bond movies may seem an ill-advised venture (why parody a genre which already had its tongue firmly in its cheek?), William Dear's extravagant romp is not without moments of wit and ingenuity. All the genre bases are touched: the attractively wicked villain; the monosyllabic thug with a metal hand; the deadly scorpions; the rocket-launching sports car. Alas, as the action escalates, the laughs decrease; *Teen Agent* becomes merely an adolescent adventure-movie with limp chases and tensionless brawls. Richard Grieco and Gabrielle Anwar make a bland double act, and the talented Linda Hunt is relegated to playing yet another twisted caricature cameo.

Mark Kermode

Reviews

Stanno tutti bene
Teen Agent

Certificate
15
Distributor
Columbia Tri-Star
Production Company
Tri-Star Pictures
In association with
Island World Inc
Executive Producers
Mark Burg
Chris Zarpas
Producers
Jack E. Freedman
Wayne S. Williams
Patricia Herskovic
Co-producers
Donald C. Klune
Nicholas Hassitt
Associate Producer
Doug Metzger
Production
Co-ordinators
Judi Rosner
Sheila Warner
Unit Production Manager
Donald C. Klune
Location Managers
Lauren Ross
San Antonio:
Michael Moody
2nd Unit Director
Micky Moore
CASTING
Caro Jones
New York:
Brian Chavanne
Julie Mossberg
Location:
Ivy Weiss
Associates:
Jack Jones
Barbara Spitz
Bean Garby
Assistant Directors
Doug Metzger
Jerry L. Ballew
Linda J. Brachman
Thomas Zapata
Sean Kavanagh
Brian Steward
2nd Unit:
Donald Roberts
John Scotti
Screenplay
Daniel Petrie Jnr
David Koepf
Based on the novel by
William P. Kennedy
Director of Photography
Thomas Burstyn
Colour
Continental
Prints by Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography
Rexford Metz
Camera Operator
Chris Tufty
2nd Camera/ Steadicam Operator
Anastas Michos
Editor
Michael Kahn
Production Designer
Chester Kaczynski
Art Director
Marc Dabe
Set Design
Masako Masuda
Set Decorator
Judi Sandin
Set Dressers
Steve H. George
Max Greene
On Set:
Pasco Di Carlo
Scenic Artist
Key:
Lynn Welch
Storyboard Artist
David Negron Jnr
Special Effects Supervisor
Cliff Wenger
Special Effects Foreman
John Downey
Music
Robert Folk
Music Performed by
Irish Films Orchestras

Orchestrations
Robert Folk
Additional:
Randy Miller
Peter Tomashek
Supervising Music Editor
Kenneth Wannberg
Costume Design
Betsy Cox
Costumers
Key:
Roseann Milano
Supervisor:
Kevin Faherty
2nd Unit:
Kristine Brown
Make-up
Key:
David Atherton
2nd Unit:
Tea Jay Glass
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editor
Tom McCarthy
Sound Editors
Mark Gordon
Bill Hartman
Gary Krivacek
Vic Lackey
Roxanne McCarthy
Chris Welch
ADR Editor
Bob Kizer
ADR Recordist
Doc Kane
Sound Recordists
Russell Fager
2nd Unit:
Greg Broussard
Music:
Brian Masterson
ADR Recordist
Doc Kane
Foley Recordist
Gary Hecher
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Denis Blackerby
Terry Porter
Mel Metcalfe
David J. Hudson
Foley Artists
Jeffrey Wilhoit
Jim M. Moriana
Chief Technical Adviser
Major Christopher G. Chalko
Technical Advisers
Lieutenant Colonel Darrell G. Elmore
Major Dennis A. Hunsinger
Production Assistants
Noah Albert
Elizabeth Conley
Debbie Cutler
Angie Kreinbrink
Set:
Tonya Suzanne
Stunt Co-ordinator
Chuck Waters
Aerial/Stunt Co-ordinator
Jim Gavin
Stunts
Joseph Alvarez
Fernando Andrews
Brad Bovee
Phil Fravel
Rick Kahana
Eric Mansker
Jeff O'Haco
Jimmy Ortega
Gary Tacon
Jim Waters
Doug Yensan

Cast
Sean Astin
Billy Tepper
Wil Wheaton
Joey Trotta
Keith Coogan
Snuffy Bradberry
Andrew Divoff
Luis Cali
R. Lee Ermye
General Kramer
Mason Adams
Deputy Director Brown
Denholm Elliott
Headmaster
Louis Gossett Jnr
Dean Parker
George Perez
Ricardo Montoya
T. E. Russell
Hank Giles
Shawn Phelan
Derek
Michael Champion
Jack Thorpe
Tracy Brooks Swope
Jennifer
Max Maxwell
HRT Commander
Joe Inscoe
Agent Grimes
Jerry Lyden
Ben
Rene Gatica
Colombian Judge
Jeremiah McLerran
Ted
Jesse Doran
Enrique Cali
Stan Kelly
Sheriff
Carol Shoemaker
Press Secretary
D. Adam Bonifant
Nicholas Josephson
Mark Retz
Guber
Paul Sincoff
Brave Student
Richard Travis
Frank the Guard
Janet Orcutt
Woman in Pink
Knowl Johnson
"Phil" Donoghue
Rafael Robledo
Carlos
Thomas R. Trigo
Ruiz
Jerry Valdez
Jorge
Russell C. Gagnon
Guard
Richard Warner
Deputy Marshall
Christopher Northrup
Camouflaged Soldier
Joe Banks
Brown's Aide
Rick Warner
FBI SAC
Sarah Stavrou
Agent at Console
David Norris
Concerned Student
Todd Bonifant
Mike Rogerson
Grady Weatherford
Students
Darrell Elmore
Dennis Hunsinger
Snipers
Cliff McLaughlin
Brian Williams
Commandos
Jeff Ramsey
Nick Dimitri
Border Patrol Officers
Mark Brutsche
Cynthia Hayden
Denise Gordy
Michael Costello
Mimi Eisman
Lenny Steinline
Angry Parents
Lloyd Williams
Major
Jeremy Caplan
Roy Borden
Deputy Sheriffs
John Shaw
Cali's Lawyer

10,050 feet
112 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Daniel Petrie Jnr

When South American drug baron Enrique Cali is extradited to the United States and imprisoned, his son Luis swears revenge. The son of the judge who convicted Cali is removed from the Regis school – an élite establishment for the drop-out sons of wealthy families, known as the 'Rejects' school – and placed under federal protection. Meanwhile, Billy Tepper, a three-time expellee – is chastised by Dean Parker for selling alcohol and tapping the Regis phone line. Luis and his mercenaries raid the campus and, when thwarted in their search for the judge's son, hold the entire school hostage, demanding Cali's release.

Luis wires the building with explosives triggered by a remote-control device strapped to his wrist, and orders a hostage head-count every hour: if one goes missing, five will die. The army arrives, and while they discuss tactics with Dean Parker, Billy and four friends make their own plans: doing detailed sketches of their captors; documenting their names and positions; and assessing their weaponry. New Jersey Mafia boss Trotta, whose son Joey is a hostage, meanwhile instructs the jailed Cali to effect the boy's release.

Using a student's remote-controlled aeroplane to distract the guards, Billy flees the school and delivers to the army details of a plan to disconnect Luis' remote-control unit. He 'escapes' back to the school (against the army's wishes) just in time to prevent the execution of the headmaster. The army receives instructions from Washington to negotiate, but Dean Parker persuades them that Billy's plan can work. Luis receives instructions to release Joey Trotta, but the boy, who despises his criminal father, assaults a guard and runs amok with his machine-gun before being shot dead. Trotta is enraged, and Cali dies at the hands of fellow prisoners.

With little time before Luis learns of his father's death, a flash signal alerts Billy to carry out his plan. He and a friend crawl through a ventilation pipe to the headmaster's office, where they switch a crucial chip in Luis' detonator with a similar chip from the toy plane. Detected on their return, the friends overpower a guard as the army moves in. Defying instructions, Dean Parker joins in the assault while the hostages hide in the school's deep basement (previously put to various nefarious uses by the boys). Billy is held at gunpoint by Luis, who also wounds Dean Parker before being shot in the head after his detonating device fails. The terrorists are overpowered and Billy is reunited with the other boys.

A peculiar sub-genre has recently flourished in American cinema: the 'teenage action movie', wherein youthful heroes replace traditionally middle-aged ones. Films such as *Iron Eagle* 1&2, and this year's *Teen Agent*, have tapped into a lucrative market by offering young viewers heroes of their own age. What distinguishes *Toy Soldiers* in this category is that it is far more violent than one would expect – these movies' selling point is usually also their downfall, for in exploiting the teen-audience market, they forfeit the right to hard-core violence. Daniel Petrie Jnr's film features bloody massacres, multiple impact wounds (a particularly touchy area for the international censors), and even the graphic on-screen slaying of a young victim. Indeed, it is to Petrie's credit that despite the limitations of the patently ridiculous storyline (schoolboys defeat international terrorists), he has managed to keep the action sequences gritty and convincing.

The villains, too, are unusually ruthless: Andrew Divoff's Che Guevarian Luis is an earthy terrorist worthy of a more adult vehicle. Louis Gossett Jnr turns in a sturdy but hackneyed performance as another tight-lipped disciplinarian with a heart of gold, while Denholm Elliott remains quintessentially and caricaturedly British: "This is a book", he drones laconically, waving a weighty volume before a class of stupefied boys, "Some of you may have seen one before – on television". Petrie also manages to inject a somewhat subversive note into the proceedings, dressing the strapping boys in their underpants while they talk about "coming through in the end", playing up the homo-erotic aspect which underwrites the traditional male-bonding rituals. An uneasy blend of adult entertainment and childish exploitation, *Toy Soldiers* cannot make up its mind what it wants to be – which is exactly what makes it interesting.

Mark Kermode



In two minds: Sean Astin, Andrew Divoff



Long-distance loneliness: Alan Rickman, Juliet Stevenson...

Certificate

PG
Distributor
 Samuel Goldwyn
 Company/Winston
Production Company
 BBC Films
 For Screen Two
 In association with
 BBC Enterprises/
 Lionheart
Executive Producer
 Mark Shivas
Producer
 Robert Cooper
Production Associate
 Simon Mills
Location Manager
 Christine McMurrich
Casting
 Michelle Guish
Assistant Directors
 Peter Markham
 Todd Austin
 Ajay Parekh
Screenplay
 Anthony Minghella
Director of Photography
 Remi Adefarasin
 In colour
Visual Effects Consultant
 Ian Legg
Graphic Designer
 Iain MacDonald
Editor
 John Stothart
Production Designer
 Barbara Gasnold
Music
 Barrington Pheloung
Music Extracts
 "Sonata No.3
 for Cello and Piano,
 2nd Movement",
 "Brandenburg
 Concerto No.3,
 1st Movement",
 "Sarabande",
 "Keyboard Concerto
 No.7, Andante" by
 Johann Sebastian
 Bach
Music Performed by
 Cello:
 Caroline Dale
 Piano:
 Eleanor Alberga

Songs

"Skrawione Serce"
 (Bleeding Heart),
 traditional Polish folk
 song: "A Case of You"
 by Joni Mitchell;
 "The Sun Ain't Gonna
 Shine Anymore"
 by Crewe & Gaudio;
 "Tangled Up in Blue"
 by Bob Dylan;
 "Raining in My Heart"
 by Bryant & Bryant
Costume Design
 James Keast
Make-up
 Fran Needham
Sound Editor
 Helen Whitehead
Sound Recordists
 Jim Greenhorn
 Aad Wirtz
 Music:
 Keith Gunn
 Dolby stereo
Footsteps Artist
 Pauline Griffiths
Advisers
 Music:
 Andrew Brown
 Matthew Lee
 Simon Mills
 Magic:
 Brian Miller
Film Extracts
 Brief Encounter (1945)
 Easy Street (1917)
 The Lavender Hill Mob
 (1951)

Cast

Juliet Stevenson
 Nina
Alan Rickman
 Jamie
Bill Paterson
 Sandy
Michael Maloney
 Mark
Jenny Howe
 Burge
Carolyn Choa
 Translator
Christopher Rozycki
 Titus
Keith Bartlett
 Plumber
David Ryall
 George
Stella Maris
 Maura
Henry James
 Maura's Baby
Deborah Findlay
 Claire
Ian Hawkes
 Harry
Vania Vilers
 Frenchman
Arturo Venegas
 Roberto
Richard Syms
 Symonds
Mark Long
 Isaac
Teddy Kempner
 Freddie
Graeme Du-Fresne
 Pierre
Frank Baker
 Bruno
Tony Bluto
 Anthony
Heather Williams
 Midwife
Awam Amkpa
 Hamilton Baillie
Nick Burge
 Steven Deproost
Nitin Ganatra
 Leroy Joseph
Jonathan Lunn
 Eddie Vincent
Tom Yang
 Ghosts
Members of the Reach Group

9,578 feet
 106 minutes

United Kingdom, 1990

Director: Anthony Minghella

● Nina, mourning the recent and sudden death of her lover Jamie, who was a gifted cellist, visits a bereavement therapist and, along with her sense of desolation, admits to a feeling that Jamie is still around. In between, she draws consolation from her friends at the translation agency where she works, particularly the fatherly Sandy, the eccentric Titus, and Maura, who is about to have a baby. Her sister also pays regular visits and tries to bring some order to Nina's unkempt and crumbling Highgate flat, which is the source of many problems including recent infestation by rats.

Then one evening Jamie returns as a ghost. Nina is ecstatic to have him back in her life and ensconced in her flat (they never lived together while he was alive). She takes off from work to spend time with Jamie, although she continues to see Maura, to whom she is teaching English. One afternoon they go to a café where Roberto, a friend of Maura's, works. Maura and Roberto are Chilean exiles – she was once a film-maker and he a doctor – but when the three chat together in Spanish, they attract the attention of the bigoted café owner. Accusing Roberto of stealing from the takings, the owner sacks him. A row ensues which is suddenly stopped when a young man starts doing magic tricks in the café.

Back at home, Nina finds that the rats have gone but that she is now infested with film-buff ghosts: Jamie has been asking his phantom friends back for all-night video shows. Shortly afterwards, she bumps into the young magician on a bus: he turns out to be an art-therapy teacher called Mark. He asks her out and she accepts, but later turns up to call off their date. That night she returns home to find Jamie and his friends rearranging her flat. She tells the friends that they must leave. Nina and Jamie pledge their love for each other, but she tells him that she wants her own life.

The next day, Nina visits Mark at his school, and tells him about Jamie and why she has been so reticent. That evening, the two go back to Mark's home. When she returns to her flat, Nina finds that Jamie has gone and the rats have returned. Later Mark comes to pick her up; as they drive away, Jamie and his friends wave unnoticed at the window, a small tear glistening in Jamie's eye.

● One of the most remarkable things about TV writer Anthony Minghella's feature film debut is the ecstatic response it has garnered from American critics. As one of the first batch of BBC films

made for the Sam Goldwyn company, it was guaranteed a select theatrical release in the States and opened to truly, madly, deeply felt adulation. The key to its success, perhaps, is in the film's billing as the thinking person's *Ghost* – to which it bears only the most superficial resemblance. *Truly, Madly, Deeply* is a plaintive cry from the heart of its eccentric Highgate milieu (the fashionable location of so many well-travelled English TV dramas is signposted with underground emblem blazing in the dark at the beginning of the film).

Like Nina's flat, the script is scattered with erudite *objets trouvés* befitting a cosy bohemian life style. The North London setting is the therapy-friendly habitat from Minghella's drama series, *What If It's Raining*, in which he charted the break-up of an 80s marriage, championing the loneliness of a long-distance father. Here, everybody seems bereft: Nina translates postcards for Sandy from his estranged Spanish-speaking son, the exile Maura longs for her country, the lonely, comical Titus longs for anybody, while Mark is another long-distance father (played by Minghella regular Michael Maloney).

But it is Nina's grief that is most carefully observed. Minghella created the role for Juliet Stevenson, and her performance, imbued with all the pain of mourning, also snaps with a vibrancy and humour. Alan Rickman, after playing a bunch of delightfully salacious big-screen baddies, fires the character of Jamie with a tender charm. Minghella can gracefully flip the mood from pathos to comedy, and Jamie's fellow ghosts are an entertaining night chorus of the shuffling dead.

But despite odd attempts at stylisation, the film's small-screen pedigree is too often apparent (the clips from real movies in the ghosts' midnight film feasts, from *Brief Encounter* to *The Lavender Hill Mob*, provide the only flashes of large-screen craft). Minghella's script and the performances are undeniably moving, and tug at a score of heart strings – but is the real pleasure of this film for an audience finally that different from *Ghost*?

Lizzie Francke



...Michael Maloney



What they're not: Laura San Giacomo, Liam Neeson

Certificate
18
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Carnival Films
In association with
Columbia
Pictures/LWT
Producer
Brian Eastman
Associate Producer
Vincent Winter
Production
Co-ordinator
Bi Benton
Production Manager
Susie Feldott
Location Manager
Howard Gibbins
Casting
Anne Henderson
USA:
Mike Fenton
Assistant Directors
Terry Needham
Simon Hinkley
Tim Lewis
David Carrigan
USA:
Steve Feldott
Ron Palazzo
Screenplay
Simon Moore
Directors of
Photography
Vernon Layton
USA:
Ivan Strasburg
In colour
Additional
Photography
Robin Vidgeon
Ken Coles
Camera Operators
John Maskall
USA:
Bob Jessup
Steadicam Operator
Nigel Kirton
Editor
Tariq Anwar
Production Designer
Tim Hutchinson
Art Director
Tony Reading
Set Decorators
Stephanie MacMillan
USA:
Joel Washnetz

Special Effects
Supervisor
David Harris
Special Effects
Steve Hamilton
Models
Chrissie Overs
Music/Music
Director
Christopher Gunning
Costume Design
Penny Rose
Costume Supervisor
Catherine Halloran
Wardrobe
Beverly Saifer
Make-up Supervisor
Peter Frampton
Make-up Artists
Laura San Giacomo:
Ivana Primorac
USA:
Sheila Walker
Titles
The Optical
Partnership
Sound Editors
Christopher Ackland
Dialogue:
Ian Fuller
Sound Recordist
Ken Weston
Sound Effects
Editor
Stan Fiferman
Stunts
Paul Weston
Val Musetti
Steve Dent
Nick Gillard

Cast
Liam Neeson
Tony Aaron
Kenneth Cranham
Frank
Laura San Giacomo
Angeline
Maggie O'Neill
Hazel
Alan Talbot
Powers
Malcolm Storry
Waterston
Martin Grace
Colin
Kevin Moore
Barrister
Stephen Oxley
Hotel Deskman
Colin Dudley
Hotel Waiter
Richard Graham
Denny
Alison Ruffelle
Victoria Alcock
Chambermaids
Michael Almaz
Simon Stasio
Tony Hughes
Undertaker
Alphonsia
Emmanuel
Selina
Pamela Sholto
Housekeeper
Stephen Moore
Roscoe
Alan Stocks
Paul
Nicolette McKenzie
Mrs Roscoe
Tommy Wright
Hotel Janitor
Lee Whitlock
Ben
Alex Norton
Prosecuting Lawyer
Noel Coleman
Judge
Kenneth Hadley
Forensic Scientist
Danny Schiller
Defence Lawyer
Joanna Brookes
Travel Agent
Andrew Dunford
Court Clerk
Roy Sampson
Jury Foreman
P.J. Davidson
Executioner
Steve Murray
Executioner's
Assistant
Christopher
Whittingham
Prison Warder
Terry John
Max Cane
Switchboard
Operators
Gordon Salkild
Prison Governor

8,985 feet
100 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Simon Moore

Brighton, 1957. Tony Aaron, a police detective assigned to watch the house of Powers, a shady club-owner, is having an affair with the latter's wife Hazel. When Powers returns early one evening, Tony's partner Frank tries to warn him, but Powers catches the couple in the act and goes for his shotgun. Tony escapes, but a fellow police officer is killed. Two years later, having resigned from the force and married Hazel, Tony runs a shoestring detective agency providing phoney evidence for divorce cases, with Hazel acting as 'co-respondent'.

One such hotel set-up is arranged for a famous artist, Simon Stasio. Arriving to take his incriminating photograph, Tony finds both Stasio and Hazel shot dead; also, Stasio's right thumb has been cut off. Tony is questioned by Frank, with whom he is still on friendly terms, though chief suspicion falls on Stasio's mistress, Angeline, an art student he had installed in his villa with all his paintings, to the fury of his dispossessed wife Selina. Angeline claims to have spent the evening of the murder conferring with Stasio's lawyer Roscoe.

Reluctantly abetted by Frank, Tony starts to investigate the killings, but is thrown out by Angeline when he invades Stasio's villa. When he returns, they embark on a passionate love affair. She explains that Stasio's pictures were only authenticated genuine if marked by his thumbprint. The missing murder weapon turns up in the hotel furnace, and proves to be Tony's gun, which he claims had been stolen in a break-in. Stasio's will is read: signed on the day of the murder, it leaves everything to Angeline. Frank trails Roscoe to a gay brothel, and puts pressure on the lawyer to reveal the truth. Roscoe kills himself, but leaves a note incriminating Tony.

Tried and found guilty, Tony is sentenced to death. He pleads with Frank to make one final search of the villa. Frank breaks in and finds Stasio's severed thumb in Angeline's paintbox; in a frantic dash to the prison, he saves Tony from the gallows. Angeline is convicted of the murders and given life imprisonment. Tony visits her in jail, where she accuses him of having set her up. In Miami, Tony meets Selina, who congratulates him on the success of their plan, and on the wealth they will realise from Stasio's paintings. Tony responds moodily, still obsessed by the memory of Angeline.

"Do you think we know what we're doing", the seductive femme fatale asks the bemused private

eye as they embrace, "or do you think we're driven by things we can't control?" Crossing the murder scam of *Double Indemnity* with the corkscrew twists of Lang's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, Simon Moore's first film as a writer-director is a highly stylised and referential performance, echoing countless doomed set-ups in classic noir movies. It is also, of course, a pastiche of a pastiche, by now offering a homage to the likes of *Body Heat*.

Not that all the references are to Hollywood: the film's setting is a sleazy, sinful Brighton out of Graham Greene via the Boulting Brothers, and the resort's alleyways and peeling, shabby-genteel terraces are shot and lit to emphasise their theatricality. From the formalised charades of Tony Aaron's seedy trade – paid co-respondents slipping chaste into bed with clients, to be 'caught' by the detective who set up the whole deal – the film modulates into the deadlier game of the murder hunt. Angeline, making her entrance in broad Audrey Hepburn hat and dark glasses, looks every inch the *femme fatale*, and Tony, susceptible and fatalistic, with his squalid office and constantly repossessed cars, seems a natural fall guy.

What links them and finally, it's hinted, betrays them both, is a shared hatred of the roles they've been allotted. "People always think they're better than me – and they are", Tony muses gloomily, telling Angeline, "We're nothing, you and me – we burn to be what we're not". It's this fierce dissatisfaction that leaves them open to manipulation by the more calculating Selina: a craftier player who knows how to rewrite the script. Period, as well as setting, contributes to the theme of shifting façades. One scene takes place against a backdrop of fireworks celebrating New Year 1960, neatly locating the action on the cusp of the decades, with a repressive morality about to give way to something looser.

For the most part, the film displays a nice sense of when to screw up the tension, and when to defuse it with a mocking detail – as when Tony, breaking into Stasio's seafront villa, is floored by a blow from a rolling-pin, like any errant husband in a Donald McGill postcard. Moore finally overplays his hand, however, going beyond pastiche – and even beyond parody – with the last-minute mercy dash to the gallows. Barring this lapse, *Under Suspicion* displays most of the virtues of a well-constructed seaside roller-coaster. Twists, switchbacks, lots of flashing lights and gaudy paintwork: no great emotional significance but a thoroughly exhilarating ride.

Philip Kemp



Familiar vices: Philippe Noiret, Jean-Pierre Marielle...

Certificate

15

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production

Companies

Renn

Productions/Films

A2/DD Productions

In association with

Soficas Sofi-ARP/Sofica

Investimage 2 and 3

Executive Producer

Pierre Grunstein

Production Manager

Patrick Bordier

Production

Supervisors

Marc Vade

Francis Barrois

Location Managers

Dominique Treibert

Valerie Leblanc

Jean Cirla

Jean-Paul Camail

Assistant Directors

Thierry Verrier

Alain Agostini

Natalie Engelstein

Thomas Langmann

Laura Waddington

Casting

Gérard Moulevrier

Screenplay

Claude Berri

Ariette Langmann

Based on the novel

by Marcel Aymé

Director of

Photography

Renato Berta

In colour

Camera Operator

Jean-César Chibaut

Video

Laura Dollfus

Editor

Hervé de Luze

Art Director

Bernard Vezat

Set Decorator

Daniele Lagrange

Music

Jean-Claude Petit

Costume Design

Caroline de Vivaise

Wardrobe

Paul Mangenot

Gil Nair

Christiane Fageol

Yvette Bonnay

Hélène Robin

Gérard Staub

Make-up

Jean-Pierre Eychenne

Marianne Colette

Prosthetics

Michele Burke

Sound Editors

Michel Kochendler

Michele Hubinon

Sound Recordists

Louis Gimel

Dominique

Hennequin

Dialogue:

Jacqueline Mariani

Dennis Coq

Sound Re-recordists

Jacques Lévy

Sound Effects

Laurent Lévy

François Lepeuple

Production

Assistant

Jacqueline Tolianker

Subtitles

J.P. Carasso -

M. Katims

Cast

Philippe Noiret

Watrin

Gérard Depardieu

Léopold

Jean-Pierre Marielle

Archambaud

Michel Blanc

Gaigneux

Michel Galabru

Monglat

Gérard Desarthe

Maxime Loin

Fabrice Luchini

Jourdan

Daniel Prévost

Rochard

Florence Darel

Marie-Anne

Daniele Lebrun

Mme Archambaud

Myriam Boyer

Maria Gaigneux

Josiane Leveque

Andréa

Dominique Bluzet

Michel Monglat

Yves Afonso

Brigadier

Ticky Holgado

Megrin

Hervé Rey

Pierre

Vincent Garls

Leduc

Alain Stern

Charles Watrin

André Chaumeau

Policeman

Bernard Ballet

Police Inspector

Paul Doumer

Warder

Gérard Bole de

Chaumont

Gallien

Patrice Melennec

Montfort

Thierry Theoleyre

Alfred

André Charrondiere

Mayor

Daniel Dedieu

Priest

Lydie Lorente

Sabine Lorente

Morgan Formes

Prune Semof

Gaigneux's Children

8,950 feet

99 minutes

Subtitles

France 1990**Director: Claude Berri**

● France, 1945. In a recently liberated town, the Archambauds, a middle-class Catholic couple, must share their apartment with Gaigneux, a Communist, and his working-class family, and with Watrin, a widowed schoolteacher whose classes now meet in Léopold's café-bar.

Archambaud is philosophical about his piano-playing daughter, Marie-Anne, slipping off into the woods with Michel Monglat, as this war-profiteer's son is a good marriage prospect. A morally uneasy ex-Vichyite, Archambaud is reassured by Watrin, whose wife's death, from Allied bombs, has transformed his socialism into a sardonic love of humanity, even in its egoism and hypocrisy.

On Christian principle, the Archambauds shelter Maxime Loin, a too-earnest Fascist now on the run. Léopold, an ex-fairground wrestler turned irascible alcoholic, hears Watrin teaching Racine's *Andromaque*, and is inspired to compose a Resistance tragedy in lumbering alexandrines. Gaigneux, who silently desires Marie-Anne, becomes uneasy as two Comrades, Rochard, a railwayman, and Jourdan, a bourgeois intellectual, plan semi-random denunciations of bourgeois opponents for collaborating. The Party expels Rochard for barfly accusations of Léopold, but Jourdan concludes that Léopold is protecting Maxime; exploiting the CP's prestige, as erstwhile backbone of the Resistance, Jourdan has Léopold arrested on suspicion.

Léopold bullies Rochard into minding the bar, but his imprisonment aggravates his alcoholism. Though Watrin and Gaigneux try to moderate Jourdan's hatred of his own class, his resolve to beat up Rochard, as a class traitor, falters only through his mother's-boy sensitivity. Léopold, cleared, celebrates with his much-abused but adoring wife Andréa, and, drunkenly roistering around the town square, he shouts out his barkeeper's inside dope on practically everybody, including Monglat père. A train brings repatriated POWs, among them Watrin's son, whose happiness is clouded first by Watrin's unfeeling announcement of his mother's death, and then by Gaullist militia-men beating up his best friend during the mayor's welcoming oration.

Marie-Anne catches her seemingly prim mother with Maxime, and jilts Michel to become an actress. The wily and influential old Monglat has four policemen sent to arrest Léopold who, setting about them, is shot dead. Though Michel confronts his

father with the choice of denunciation or suicide, the unabashedly immoral old man outfaces him; both men end broken in spirit. Gaigneux, meaning to sneak up on Marie-Anne, discovers Maxime, and leads him to the police station. Archambaud and Watrin, musing on life's ambiguities, hardly notice a scantily attended ceremony honouring the Resistance dead.

● *Uranus* is named for the cruel planet so haunting the schoolteacher's dreams that he greets each day grateful for humanity's modest and familiar vices. But his distant planet is, of course, this town; and the moral ironies of his beatific acceptance are nicely exploited by the author, Marcel Aymé, of the original novel. It completes a virtual triptych (1942-7) about civic nastiness permeating French society, with *Travelingue* (whose title plays on avant-garde film snobs' pronunciation of "le travelling"), and *Le Chemin des ecoliers*.

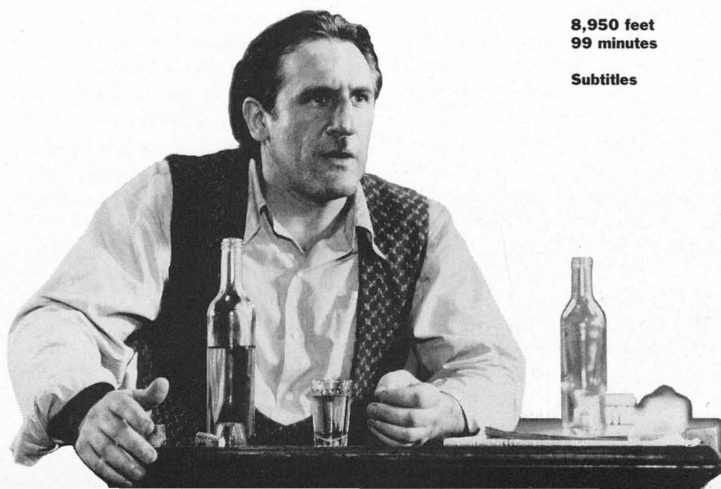
Uranus also protests against 'l'épuration', the Liberation purges which, aimed at Fascists, collaborators and profiteers, were notoriously inconsistent, being much abused for personal grudges, intrigues and class war. In detailing much of this, Claude Berri's film breaks a near-taboo in movies (outside minor manifestations, such as Emmanuelle Riva's head being shaved for loving a German soldier in *Hiroshima, mon amour*).

Aymé, a scriptwriter for Chenal and Daquin (the leading Communist director), felt smeared, though trivially so compared with his fellow-pessimist, Henri-Georges Clouzot, who was indeed unjustly blacklisted (on virtually the same issue). Aymé's indignation at witch hunts led by the left (then extensively Stalinist) undoubtedly influenced his novel. Its Gaigneux is far less sympathetic than the film's, who reflects the more idealistic Communist vote of Berri's father in 1945. The fugitive Fascist evokes Céline (now the left's ►



... Michel Blanc, Florence Darel

... Gérard
Depardieu...



◀ favourite Fascist, after Leni Riefenstahl) and, perhaps, Brasillach, the film critic against whose death sentence Aymé pleaded with de Gaulle.

Critics have debated whether Aymé (1902-1967) was a cynic, a right-wing anarchist, or a rigorously impartial moral realist. His caustic vision certainly suits modern demythifying of history, and broadens the civic selfishness in Berri's reworkings of Pagnol. This more crowded canvas and complicated narrative, close to a novel's discursiveness, does rather foreshorten its principal characters into specimens. In this cramped dramatic perspective, the characters come halfway between protagonist and cameo, not engaging the fuller dialectic of identification and moral-critical suspense.

But if the balance of sympathy and estrangement is never quite satisfying, it's always interesting. Watrin's dreamy tenderness entails a chilly aloofness, while Archambaud, however hypocritical, is also an *homme moyen morale*, with the earthy realism of Raimu's characters in Pagnol's own films.

Two factors may increase the film's obliqueness for English audiences. The moral-political in-fighting between political shades is radically unlike English structures; and the mixture of sensitivity and moral misanthropy, though gearing smoothly into the "comedy of ignominy", a popular French genre, exploited by Mocky, Leconte, Godard, Buñuel, et al, is at odds with the slower, heavier, moral suspense prevalent in English political puritanisms. The necessarily copious English subtitles may also distract from the tersely expressive faces.

But if *Uranus* doesn't offer the gut momentum generated by dramaturgy American-style, it's as fascinating as uncomfortable for right, left and centre, for commitment and scepticism, alike. Sharp human details abound; from a schoolboy's runaway sniggers at how cleverly his essay on "Resistance in Corneille" sucks up to his teacher's Socialism (which he has long abandoned), to Watrin's gentle joy, typical of his Radical-scientific generation, in man's harmony with Nature's impassive plan.

As a moral-political fresco of a French country-town, *Uranus* complements Buñuel's *Journal d'une femme de chambre* (their stories, only eleven years apart, 'bracket' French Fascism's rise and fall). Berri's film is the more disturbing for postulating moral inadequacy on all socio-political sides, and indicating how quickly vileness may supervene when social breakdown, even by liberation, substitutes chaos for consensus.

Raymond Durnat

Angry Earth

Distributor
Channel 4
Production Company
Cine Cymru
For S4C
In association with
Channel 4
Producer
Ruth Kenley
Production
Co-ordinator
Angharad Francis
Production Manager
Marc Munden
Casting
Suzy Korel
Assistant Directors
Maurice Hunter
Cheryl Davies
Dewi Griffiths
Screenplay
Karl Francis
Director of
Photography
Robert Pugh Evans
In colour
Editor
Chris Lawrence
Production Designer
Francis Pugh
Art Department
David C. Hughes
Keith Maxwell
Phil Rawthorne
Leighton Davies
Gwen's Paintings
Pauline Williams
Special Effects
David Williams
Music
Ken Howard
Music Extracts
"Aria" from *The Pearl Fishers* by Georges Bizet, performed by Théâtre National de l'Opéra Comique, Paris
Music
Arrangements
John Altman
Costume Design
Katie Pegg
Wardrobe
Supervisor
Sue Rawthorne
Make-up
Supervisor:
Sabrina Low
Old Gwen:
Penny Smith
Titles
Les Latimer Opticals
Sound Recordist
Simon Bishop
Sound Re-recordist
John Cross
Production
Assistant
Shân Davies
Snake Handler
David Lester,
Serpentarium

Cast
Sue Roderick
Gwen
Mark Lewis Jones
Guto
Maria Pride
Siwan
Dafydd Hywel
Evan
Robert Pugh
Emlyn
Gareth Skelding
Twm
Catrin Elisa
Mair
Jack Shepherd
Dr Price
Phyllis Logan
Mary Penrys Jones
Anne Valery
Mrs Penrys Jones
Donna Edwards
Nurse Davies
Ruth Sheen
Nurse Berry
Charlotte West-Oram
Sister Jackson
Keith Allen
Photographer
Meredith Edwards
Professor James
Crispin Letts
Andrew
Dominic Letts
Kevin Allen
Soldiers
Ian Rowlands
Jack
Jack Walters
Shoni Mawr
Alan Devlin
Grant
Robin Griffiths
Mr Thomas
Emyr Ilyr
Dai
Siwan Jones
Margaret
Olive Michael
Ann
Sharon Morgan
Dai's Mother
Hubert Rees
Mayor
Simon Coady
TV Director
Boyd Clack
Master of Ceremonies
Caroline Stubbs
Nurse

9,630 feet
107 minutes

Some Welsh
dialogue; subtitles

United Kingdom 1989
Director: Karl Francis

 Aged 110, Gwen is the oldest woman in Britain. Nurses and press fuss around her hospital bed as the Queen's birthday telegramme is read out, but Gwen is preoccupied with visions of her youth. A nurse fetches her a box of her effects and reads aloud a letter Gwen wrote to the editor of the *Daily Herald*, recounting her life's struggles. When she was thirteen, her family moved to the Rhondda Valley; three years later, her coal-miner father has already been killed, and Gwen is married to Emlyn, a miner. Later, Gwen is pregnant with a fourth child when Emlyn is killed by gas in the mine, and her oldest son Guto is sacked for speaking out in a protest over safety conditions.

Gwen and her children are evicted from their home, and move to a dilapidated house in another village. She starts work as an undertaker's assistant, preparing bodies for burial, but initially meets with hostility for tending the body of a scab miner during the strike. Gwen gives birth to a daughter Gwennllian. Acting as a psychic medium for a rich woman, Gwen suddenly has a premonition of violent struggles. As she remembers the mounting tension between miners and police during the strike, Gwen's thoughts in hospital are interrupted by a newspaper photographer who takes her picture against a background of banners in a pro-NHS strike.

Gwen remembers how, when police and miners clashed, she helped to take a wounded man to hospital. Intercepted by soldiers, she is forced to flee, but is pursued by them and raped. Traumatized, she becomes silent and withdrawn, and begins to have visions of Emlyn. A friendly doctor, Price, arranges for her to be admitted to the sanatorium of Professor James; at a dance, Price, with the help of Guto and his wife Siwan, frames one of Gwen's assailants for theft. At the sanatorium, Gwen imagines revenging herself on the other soldier.

She returns to her village on Whit Sunday, 1913, in an optimistic atmosphere, as the community is working together to build a much-needed hospital. Evan, a leading agitator in the strike, becomes her lover and they marry, although she still has memories of Emlyn. As Siwan gives birth, Evan and Guto are killed in a gas explosion. Forced to leave home, Gwen looks forward stoically to the prospect of war. In her hospital bed, she is visited by a last vision of her dead family.

● An awkward mixture of agit-prop drama, oral history and the 'white flannel' memoir genre – represented on television by series like *Testament of Youth* – *Angry Earth* attempts to take on a more sophisticated structure than the rhetorical urgency of its argument will allow. There is little illumination in the play between Gwen's history and the present, which makes heavy weather of the difference between the old days – when, the film seems to say, times were hard but you knew where you stood – and an age of false smiles and political uncertainties (suggested by the cynicism of Keith Allen's press photographer). The opening scenes in which Gwen's visitors loom fussily over her bed in subjective shots have a slightly frenetic comic tone which jars obtrusively with the dourness of her reminiscence.

Gwen's letter proves a contrived device for motivating her flights of memory, and a clumsy hanger for poker-faced rhetoric, as in her complaint to the paper: "We watch our children starve while you prosper". However, the film's sometimes risible sloganeering is not restricted to this device. After one disaster, the sensitive, understanding Dr Price (played by Jack Shepherd as a sort of 60s social worker *avant la lettre*) comments, "It's a disgrace that we have no hospital here for the working people", and, at the end, a subtitled translation of Gwen's Welsh language voice-over reads, "Believe in peace... Say no, boys".

The film largely comes across as a standard exercise in naturalist costume drama, a hybrid of *Germinal*, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and *How Green Was My Valley*, with all the appropriate clichés. Insistently ominous music accompanies the men as they descend into the pits; an agitator eloquently addresses his audience in a bucolic clearing; Siwan gives birth at the very moment her husband dies. Quite apart from his pedigree in politically motivated television fiction – including *Boy Soldier* and *Giro City* – writer-director Karl Francis recently proved his flair at heartstring-tugging melodrama in the genuinely painful BBC film *Morphine and Dolly Mixtures*. Here the catalogue of woes is simply tiring, and when Gwen finally declares, "We will survive, we are an unconquerable race", the idea of watching her display her fortitude for another eighty-odd years is a mortifying prospect.

Jonathan Romney

Dykket (The Dive)

Distributor
Channel 4
Production Companies
Filmeffekt (Oslo)/
Millennium
Films/British Screen
(London)
In association with
Channel 4
Producers
Dag Alveberg
Patrick Cassaveti
Production Manager
Jeanette Sundby
Casting
UK:
Mary Selway
Norway:
Eva Isaksen
Assistant Director
Arve Figenschow
Screenplay
Leidulv Risan
Carlos Wiggan
Script Consultant
Christopher Wicking
Director of Photography
Harald Paalgard
In colour
Camera Operator
Frode Wik
Editor
Russell Lloyd
Production Designer
Jarle Blesvik
Set Decorator
Billy Johansson
Special Effects
Petter Borgli
Jarle Blesvik
Erik Lee
Helicopter Model
Rune Nessen
Music
Geir Bohren
Bent Aserud
Music Performed by
Obbe Soloist:
Brynjar Hoff
Song
"I Want to Live" by Stein
Berge, Stein Osvoll,
performed by Jan Bang
Wardrobe
Anne Hamre
Make-up
Siw Järbyn
Sound Editor
Jan Lindvik
Sound Recordists
Kari Nytrø
Peter A. Stoop
Dolby stereo
Sound Effects Editor
John Foster
Technical Consultants
Mayne Vagsliid
Arvid Berthelsen
Bjørn Gjerde
Production Assistant
Lucinda Sturgis
Diving Supervisors
Bjørn Gjerde
Arvid Berthelsen
Stunt Divers
Jon Are Hvalby
Jan Holand
Kåre Lier
Vigulf Schøll Larsen

Cast
Bjørn Sundquist
Gunnar
Frank Grimes
Dobrolsky
Eindride Eldsvold
Rolf
Michael Kitchen
Bricks
Sverre Anker Ousdal
Captain
Marika Lagercrantz
Ann
Nils Ole Oftebro
Akselsen
Inger Lise Westby
Sonja
John Stoudt
Assistant Supervisor
Thomas G. Stoudt
Marius
Christopher Curtis
Jonas
Steiner Raaen
Pilot
Magnar Miljeteig
Engineer

8,100 feet
90 minutes

English Version

Norway/United Kingdom 1989

Director: Tristan de Vere Cole

TV
● Old partners Bricks and Gunnar complete their last deep-sea dive together. Bricks, who has seen enough of decompression chambers, is retiring to devote himself to dolphins. Gunnar too is due a month's leave with his family, and the diving support ship is headed back to port when an emergency call comes from the mainland. A trawl net has wrapped itself around the valve of an important oil pipeline, blocking the flow. Dobrolsky, the diving controller, asks Gunnar to make one more dive before he flies home: the pipe is only 95 metres down, so there should be no need for decompression.

Gunnar and his new partner Rolf agree to go down, but when they reach the valve they find it jammed tight. The ship begins to winch up the diving bell but it too becomes stuck in the trawl net. The divers have no choice but to sit and wait until they can be freed. It turns out, however, that the reserve air tanks are empty, and on the ship above Bricks and Dobrolsky argue about the best course of action. The weather is worsening, and air supplies from the mainland will arrive too late. Dobrolsky tries to winch the bell closer, but the line snaps and the bell plummets to the seabed.

From the mainland, Gunnar's wife Ann stays in close touch with the ship. But with Gunnar and Rolf in danger of freezing to death within a half hour, Bricks makes a courageous solo dive. He manages to connect an emergency umbilical cord to the bell, but dies of exhaustion before he can attach a new tow line. Faced with their own imminent deaths, Gunnar and Rolf begin to buckle under the pressure: Rolf loses his desire to live and tries to sacrifice himself for the older man, but Gunnar convinces him of his own worth. A final desperate rescue plan works, and the bell is hoisted up to the ship just as its

oxygen runs out. Dobrolsky pumps in argon to sustain the two men until a rescue helicopter arrives, and they are found collapsed but alive on the bottom of the bell.

● As the first Anglo-Norwegian co-production, it is appropriate that *The Dive* should take place in the North Sea. Even so, it is tempting to see it as a late, off-shore entry in the recent school of sub-aquatic thrillers that has included *The Abyss*, *Leviathan* and *Deepstar Six*. Certainly, the early stages offer nothing in the way of novelty, as the diving support ship heads to port for a refit, and the crew gush about how they will spend their leave – until one final, routine diving operation develops into a disaster. It's a shaky beginning for a number of reasons: the difficulties of filming on board ship are evident in the way Tristan de Vere Cole, an old hand from British television, tries to work against the claustrophobia of the setting by constantly moving the (apparently hand-held) camera, but his pans, zooms and unsteady travelling shots are more likely to induce nausea than excitement.

Crucially, there just isn't enough dramatic interest in the hackneyed lines delivered by phone, radio mike or intercom. Inside the diving bell, the script's psychological edge is less than acute: Gunnar persuades Rolf of his life's intrinsic worth with recourse to a cassette of his music (a stroke of luck that Rolf is a composer in his spare time). But the threat of imminent death helps to focus a confused and contrived scenario, and as the plight of the two divers worsens, the film picks up some tension. De Vere Cole foregrounds the film's scientific authenticity with lengthy debates about the relative merits of hydrogen and argon as oxygen top-ups (for the record, the former is highly explosive). But most of this must be taken on trust, which just goes to prove the great advantage of a sea monster: you know exactly where you stand with it.

Tom Charity



Not knowing where you stand

Reviews

William Green reviews every retail/retail premiere video and Mark Kermode every rental/rental premiere video released this month

Hair-raising:
'Meet the
Applegates'



★ Highlights

Reviews in **Monthly Film Bulletin (MFB)** and **Sight and Sound** are cited in parentheses

Rental

Avalon

20:20 Vision NVT 12453
USA 1990

Certificate U Director Barry Levinson
Lengthy semi-autobiographical tale of immigrant life in America with much to commend it. (MFB No. 686)

Awakenings

RCA/Columbia CVT 12460
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Penny Marshall
Documenting the brief success of a sleeping-sickness miracle-cure, Robert De Niro and Robin Williams put in worthy performances, but the general tone is sickly. (MFB No. 686)

The Big Picture

20:20 Vision NVT 11456
USA 1988

Certificate 15
Director Christopher Guest
★ Video of the month! An idealistic student director is manipulated by Hollywood, and finds his debut picture transformed from art house to raunchy romp. (MFB No. 683)

The Big Steal

Warner 35393
Australia 1990

Certificate 15 Director Nadia Tass
From the director of the off-beat *Malcolm* comes a quirky tale of teen love, tricksters, and trendy cars. (MFB No. 687)

The Bonfire of the Vanities

Warner PEV 12048
USA 1990

Certificate 15
Director Brian De Palma
Miscast adaptation of Tom Wolfe's seething novel - Tom Hanks as a hard-nosed bond trader and Bruce Willis as the incisive voice of discontent. (S&S May 1991)

Cold Dog Soup

FoxVideo 2480
USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Alan Metter
A young boy is enlisted by a sultry temptress to bury her mother's dead dog in return for sexual favours. Quite possibly the worst film ever made. (MFB No. 686)

Green Card

Touchstone D311412
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Peter Weir
★ This joyous comedy finds Andie MacDowell and Gérard Depardieu marrying for legal reasons, then falling for each other. (MFB No. 686)

Kickboxer 2 - The Road Home

Entertainment EVV 1194
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Albert Pyun
More fast-footed action, this time minus the talents of Jean-Claude Van Damme. (S&S June 1991)

Kill Me Again

NBC/Ingram NB 9107
USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director John R. Dahl
Joanne Whalley-Kilmer and husband Val star in this satisfying thriller. (MFB No. 681)

King Ralph

CIC VHA 1494
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director David S. Ward
Disappointing comedy about England's royalty being wiped out and replaced by an uncouth American. (S&S May 1991)

Meet the Applegates

RCA/Columbia CVT 11966
USA 1990

Certificate 15
Director Michael Lehmann
★ Overlooked whimsy from the director of *Heathers*, combining wit with 50s sci-fi. Giant Amazon beetles infiltrate a suburban American town disguised as humans. (MFB No. 685)

Miami Blues

MCEG Virgin Vision MOR 138
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director George Armitage
A casual killer is pursued by a cop whose identity the villain assumes. Blackly comic. (MFB No. 683)

Pacific Heights

FoxVideo 1900
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director John Schlesinger
Limp yuppie psycho-thriller - Michael Keaton is vaguely interesting as a cold-blooded hustler, but Melanie Griffith is awful as the terrorised home-owner. (MFB No. 685)

Riff-Raff

Palace PVC 2233R
UK 1990

Certificate 15 Director Ken Loach
Documentary-style verisimilitude

and dramatic artifice collide in Loach's jaundiced picture of Britain's dispossessed youth. (S&S May 1991)

Robin Hood

FoxVideo 1907
UK 1990

Certificate PG Director John Irvin
Terrible TV adaptation turned feature film. (S&S June 1991)

Short Time

20:20 Vision NVT 12855
USA 1987

Certificate 15 Director Gregg Champion
Undercover cop Burt Simpson (Dabney Coleman) learns he has a fatal illness, and attempts to get killed in the line of duty. Amusing only in short bursts. (MFB No. 686)

Time of the Gypsies (Dom za Vesanje)

RCA/Columbia CVT 12117
Yugoslavia 1989

Certificate 15 Director Emir Kusturica
★ Although disjointed (it was originally a six-part TV series), the result is enrapturing - following a gypsy boy's travels from his Yugoslav village to the crime-ridden streets of Milan. Subtitles (MFB No. 675)

Whore

Palace PVC 2198R
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Ken Russell
Theresa Russell is painfully unconvincing as a street-wise hooker. (S&S September 1991)

Windprints

MCEG Virgin MVP 892
UK 1989

Certificate 15 Director David Wicht
★ Off-beat political-thriller set in Namibia about an elusive murderer who becomes a legend among the people he preys on. Boasts fine performances from John Hurt and Sean Bean. (MFB No. 680)

Rental premiere

Against the Odds

High Fliers HFV 2064
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director John Glen
Producer James Margellos Screenplay E.F. Wallengren Photography William A. Fraker Lead Actors William Campbell, Rob Estes, Amanda Wyss
91 minutes
Campbell (star of *Rocketeer*) gets

macho as a racing driver who inspires jealousy when he joins the Valiant team.

Bump in the Night

Odyssey ODY 302

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Karen Arthur
Producer Craig Anderson Screenplay
Christopher Lofton Lead Actors
Christopher Reeve, Meredith Baxter-
Birney 90 minutes

★ Throwing off his Superman garb,
Reeve plays a pederastic porn fan
with a taste for the real thing.
Surprisingly gripping.

Chernobyl: The Final Warning

First Independent VA 20135

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Anthony Page
Producer Philip Barry Screenplay
Ernest Kinoy, based on the book *Final
Warning: The Legacy of Chernobyl* by
Robert Peter Gale, Thomas Hauser
Lead Actors Jon Voight, Jason Robards,
Sammi Davis 94 minutes

Jon Voight struggles to help victims
of the Chernobyl disaster. Tailor-
made for TV-drama addicts.

Cover Up

Guild 8648

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Manny Coto
Producers Sharon Harel, Jacob Kotzky
Screenplay William Tannen
Photography David Gurfinkel Lead
Actors Dolph Lundgren, Louis Gossett
Jr., John Finn, Lisa Berkley
88 minutes

Dolph manages to save the world
from catastrophe in a role which he
describes as "challenging".

Dangerous Passion

Capital CHV 1007

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Michael Miller
Producer Paul Pompian Screenplay
Brian Taggart Photography Steven
Shaw Lead Actors Carl Weathers,
Lonette McKee, Billy Dee Williams
97 minutes

Action-adventure featuring Carl
Weathers who rose to cult status in
Craig Baxley's blaxploitation classic
Action Jackson.

Death Train

20:20 Vision NVT 12866

USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Jeff Kwitny
Executive Producer Ovido G. Assonitis
Screenplay Sheila Goldberg
Photography Adolfo Bartol Lead Actors
Mary Kohnert, William Geiger,
Jeremy Sanchez 92 minutes
A group of Californian students take
a trip to Yugoslavia where ghoulish
perils await.

Dream Machine

First Independent VA 20136

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director/Producer Lyman
Dayton Screenplay Eric Hendershot
Photography T.C. Christensen Lead
Actors Corey Haim, Evan Richards,
Susan Seaforth Hayes, Randall
England 82 minutes

Unsuccessful rehash of *Ferris Bueller's
Day Off*. Teen-throb Corey acquires a
Porsche with a corpse in the trunk
and gets his dream-girl.

House 4: The Repossession

Medusa MC 369

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Lewis Abernathy
Producer Sean S. Cunningham
Screenplay Geof Miller, Dierdre Higgins
Photography Jim Mathers Lead Actors
Terri Treas, Scott Burkholder, Melissa
Clayton 90 minutes

More surreal comic-horror from the
interminable *House* series. Plodding
narrative, but watch out for the
voracious, vomiting pizza!

In Broad Daylight

New World HFV 2065

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director James Steven
Sadwith Producers Michael Biber,
Jeffrey C. Hogue, Ricka Fisher
Screenplay William Hanley Lead Actors
Brian Dennehy, Cloris Leachman,
Marcia Gay Harden 91 minutes

★ TV-film adaptation of Harry
MacLean's best-seller. Psycho Len
Rowan terrorises a town in Missouri,
forcing the locals to fight back.

It

USA 1991

Warner PEV 12198

Certificate 15 Director Tommy Lee
Wallace Executive Producers Jim Green,
Alan Epstein Screenplay Lawrence D.
Cohen, based on the novel by
Stephen King Lead Actors Tim Curry,
Harry Anderson, Dennis Christopher,
Richard Thomas 180 minutes
Tim Curry stars as the sinister
shape-shifter in this made-for-TV
adaptation of yet another Stephen
King novel. Far more gripping
than the theatrically released
Graveyard Shift.

Judgment

Warner 25017

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Tom Torpor
Producer Dan Wigutow Screenplay Tom
Torpor Lead Actors Keith Carradine,
Blythe Danner, Jack Warden, David
Strathairn 86 minutes
A true story based on the case of
Louisiana parents who sought justice
when their local priest sexually
molested a number of young boys.

Liberty & Bash

SGE Home Video SGE 1009

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Myrl A.
Schreibman Producer Doug Forsmith
Screenplay Myrl A. Schreibman, Tina
Plakinger Photography Tom Denore
Lead Actors Lou Ferrigno, Miles
O'Keefe, Mitzi Kapture 92 minutes
Bizarre, social-conscience action-pic
about fighting drug dealers which
transmutes midway into an emotive
discussion about abortion.

Love and Betrayal

ITC 9463

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Richard
Michaels Producers Marcy Gross, Ann
Weston Screenplay Laurian Leggett
Lead Actors Stefanie Powers, David
Birney, Fran Drescher, Amanda
Peterson 94 minutes

Marriage traumas abound as a
husband flounders between
desertion and reinstatement.

Mr Destiny

Touchstone D340742

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director/Producer James
Orr Screenplay James Orr, Jim
Cruikshank Lead Actors James
Belushi, Linda Hamilton, Michael
Caine 106 minutes

★ A shameless rip-off of *It's a
Wonderful Life*. A junior exec finds out
how miserable his life would be if he
had been a success at school.

The Most Dangerous Woman Alive

Braveworld BRV 10128

USA 1988

Certificate 18 Director Christian
Marnham Producers John Karie,
S.D. Nethersole, Josh Spencer
Screenplay Michael Olson, Gabriel
Elias Photography Vincent G. Cox
Lead Actors Merete Van Kamp, Robert
Lipton, Sharon Tweed 99 minutes
Sexual-assault victim Christine sets
up camp on an island where she
plots revenge against her various
oppressors. Interesting twist on the
women-in-prison genre.

One Wild Night

Guild 8654

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Bryan Gordon
Producers John Hughes, A. Hunt
Lowry Screenplay John Hughes
Photography Don McAlpine Lead Actors
Frank Whaley, Jennifer Connelly,
Dermot Mulroney 90 minutes
Released in the US as *Career
Opportunities*, this sank without a
trace. A boy encounters a beautiful
heiress and a pair of bungling
burglars while working nights in
a department store.

Run

Hollywood Pictures D 940922

Canada/USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Geoff Burrowes
Producer Raymond Wagner Screenplay
Dennis Shyrack, Michael Boldgett
Lead Actors Patrick Dempsey, Kelly
Preston, Ken Pogue 86 minutes
A boy's involvement in a fatal
gambling brawl attracts the
attentions of the mob.

Spirits

Big Pictures BIGV 3012

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Fred Olen Ray
Producer T.L. Lankford Screenplay Jeff
Falls, R.U. King Lead Actors Erik
Estrada, Robert Quarry, Brinke
Stevens 90 minutes
From the director of *Hollywood
Chainsaw Hookers* comes the usual
witch's brew of lusty horror.

Wishful Thinking

20:20 Vision NVT 13265

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Murray Langston
Producer James Shavick Screenplay
Steve Finly, Murray Langston
Photography Roger Olkowski Lead
Actors Murray Langston, Michelle
Johnson, Ruth Buzzi 90 minutes
An agoraphobic writer gains a magic
notepad which makes his dreams
come true.

Whispers

20:20 Vision NVT 13265

USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Douglas Jackson
Producers Don Carmody, John
Dunning Screenplay Anita Doohan,
based on the novel by Dean R. Koontz
Photography Peter Benison Lead Actors
Victoria Tennant, Chris Sarandon,
Jean LeClerc 89 minutes
Silly tale about a woman terrorised
by a man she believes dead.

Retail

Alien

FoxVideo WS 1090

UK 1979 Price £12.99

Certificate 18 Director Ridley Scott
★ Sigourney Weaver fights off an
outer-space monster in this highly
polished sci-fi horror. Widescreen
version (MFB No. 548)

Amadeus

Braveworld STV 2061

USA 1984 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Milos Forman
Guilt-stricken composer Salieri,



Five finger exercise: 'Amadeus'

(F. Murray Abraham) remembers how he set out to destroy his rival Mozart (Tom Hulce playing him as an infantile genius). Fine performances. (MFB No. 612)

Bellman & True

MGM/UA PES 31013

UK 1987 Price £10.21

Certificate 15 Director Richard Loncraine

Unlikely bank heist movie. Computer expert Bernard Hill gets caught up in double dealings and danger. (MFB No. 645)

Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure

Castle CAS 9158

USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Stephen Herek
Two hip-talking friends time-travel in a cosmic telephone box and meet up with Beethoven and Genghis Khan. (MFB No. 675)

The Blue Lagoon

RCA/Columbia CVR 20029

USA 1980 Price £7.99

Certificate 15 Director Randal Kleiser
Embarrassingly bad film with Brooke Shields and a permed Christopher Atkins as ship-wrecked children discovering puberty. (MFB No. 562)

A Chorus of Disapproval

MGM/UA PES 51691

UK 1988 Price £10.21

Certificate PG Director Michael Winner
Michael Winner and playwright Alan Ayckbourn tell a quirky tale of amateur actors rehearsing *The Beggar's Opera*. The cast includes Anthony Hopkins, Jeremy Irons and Richard Briers. (MFB No. 670)

The Desert Fox

FoxVideo 1014

USA 1951 Price £12.99

Certificate PG

Director Henry Hathaway
Daring war movie which suggested

that German soldiers could be heroes too. An account of the career of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel (James Mason). B/W (MFB No. 213)

The Desert Rats

FoxVideo 1313

USA 1953 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director Robert Wise
Sequel to *The Desert Fox* (above). Richard Burton as a British officer in command of a squad of Australian soldiers. B/W (MFB No. 232)

Die Hard

FoxVideo WS 1666

USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director John McTiernan
Loud non-stop action with Bruce Willis trapped in a skyscraper. Widescreen version (MFB No. 661)

Drugstore Cowboy

Virgin VVD 925

USA 1989 Price £10.20

Certificate 18 Director Gus Van Sant
Uncomfortable look at hard-drugs culture. Matt Dillon stands out in a film that hovers between realism and romanticism. (MFB No. 671)

Earth Girls Are Easy

Braveworld STV 2034

USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Julien Temple
★ Temple's comic-book musical-



Easy pickings: Earth Girl Geena Davis

comedy, about aliens landing in the San Fernando valley and falling for the women, bounces along. (MFB No. 671)

How the West Was Won

MGM/UA PES 52052

USA 1962 Price £10.21

Certificate PG Directors Henry Hathaway, John Ford, George Marshall

Shot in three-strip Cinerama, this huge Western, aided by studio-loads of stars, packs a lot of history into less than three hours. (MFB No. 347)

Ironweed

Braveworld STV 2059

USA 1987 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Hector Babenco
A dignified slice of low-life from William Kennedy's novel. Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson are the down-and-outs at the local soup kitchen. (MFB No. 652)

The Kiss

RCA/Columbia CVR 21875

USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Pen Densham
Screenwriter Stephen Volk (*Gothic*) penned this washed-out horror. Poor Joanna Pacula is required to play everything from a vampire to a snake. (MFB No. 667)

Leningrad Cowboys Go America

Artificial Eye ART 007

Finland/Sweden 1989 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Aki Kaurismäki
★ Cheerful comedy which sends up the coming-to-America road movie à la Jarmusch and Wenders. A group of Baltic musicians set out to stun the world (or at least Mexico). Subtitles (MFB No. 674)

Life and Nothing But (La Vie et rien d'autre)

Artificial Eye ART 008

France 1989 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Bertrand Tavernier

★ Philippe Noiret traces missing soldiers after WW1 and finds himself involved with two women looking for the same man. Beautifully bleak but slightly contrived. Subtitles (MFB No. 670)

The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne

Cannon PES 31005

UK 1987 Price £10.21

Certificate 15 Director Jack Clayton
Maggie Smith plays a miserable, whiskey-drinking spinster dreaming of love. Bob Hoskins is the focus of her attention in a Dublin boarding-house. (MFB No. 652)

The Longest Day

FoxVideo 1021

USA 1962 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Directors Ken Annakin, Andrew Marton, Bernhard Wicki
D-day reconstruction on a scale to match the original, with 43 stars, hundreds of boats and 23,000 uniformed extras. B/W (MFB No. 346)

Loverboy

RCA/Columbia CVR 21876

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15
Director Joan Micklin Silver
Offensive wish-fulfilment comedy in which rich Beverly Hills women (Barbara Carrera, Kirstie Alley, Carrie Fisher) compete over a gigolo. (MFB No. 677)

Monkey Shines

Virgin VVD 936

USA 1988 Price £10.20

Certificate 18

Director George A. Romero

★ Jason Beghe suffers an accident that leaves him a quadriplegic and reliant on an intelligent househelp monkey. A clever horror. (MFB No. 673)

Parenthood

CIC VHR 1415

USA 1989 Price £10.20

Certificate 15 Director Ron Howard
Irrepressible Steve Martin in a comedy where the grown-ups show-off in front of the children. (MFB No. 672)

Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid

MGM/UA PES 50159

USA 1973 Price £10.21

Certificate 18 Director Sam Peckinpah
This is the mutilated general release version of Peckinpah's melancholic Western masterpiece, rather than the director's cut recently shown on TV. (MFB No. 477)

Quo Vadis

MGM/UA PES 50276

USA 1951 Price £10.21

Certificate PG Director Mervyn LeRoy
Megalomaniac sets and Peter Ustinov as the Emperor Nero make this classic Roman Empire tale hard to resist. (MFB No. 218)

Seven Samurai (Shichinin No Samurai)

Connoisseur CR 042

Japan 1954 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Akira Kurosawa
★ Villagers in sixteenth-century Japan enlist the help of samurais to protect them from bandits. Intriguing film that was remade by



Before the magnificent seven: 'Seven Samurai'

Hollywood as *The Magnificent Seven*. Subtitles B/W (MFB No. 255)

Solaris

Connoisseur CR 044
USSR 1972 Price £15.99

Certificate PG
Director Andrei Tarkovsky
Science-fantasy compared by many to Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, but ultimately not as satisfying. Subtitles (MFB No. 473)

Stalker

Connoisseur CR 045
USSR 1979 Price £15.99

Certificate PG
Director Andrei Tarkovsky
★ The Stalker acts as a guide into a zone created by supernatural forces, in Tarkovsky's dark vision of an alien world. Subtitles (MFB No. 564)

Star Wars Trilogy:

Star Wars

The Empire Strikes Back Return of the Jedi

FoxVideo WS 1130, WS 1425, WS 1478
USA 1977, 1980, 1983
Price £14.99 each

Certificate U Director George Lucas
★ TV is not ideal for 70mm, but at least here the full camera framing and stunning special effects are restored. Much to enjoy. Wide screen (MFB Nos. 526, 558, 594)

Steel Magnolias

RCA/Columbia CVR 21764
USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Herbert Ross
Tearjerker which wrings out the lives of several Louisiana belles. With Shirley MacLaine, Dolly Parton, Julia Roberts. (MFB No. 673)

Throne of Blood (Kumonosu-Jo)

Connoisseur CR 043
Japan 1957 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Akira Kurosawa
★ Retelling of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*,

with medieval Japan standing in for Scotland. Powerful images and gestures reflect the influence of Noh theatre. Subtitles B/W (MFB No. 293)

Tiläi

Artificial Eye ART 009
Burkina Faso/Switzerland/France
1990 Price £15.99

Certificate PG
Director Idrissa Ouedraogo
★ With strong echoes of a Greek tragedy, Ouedraogo's sparse and magnificent tale of family strife in an African village is a delight. Subtitles (MFB No. 686)

What Price Glory?

FoxVideo 1285
USA 1952 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director John Ford
Routine screen version of Maxwell Anderson's famous WW1 play. James Cagney as the strutting Captain Flagg. (MFB No. 228)

Retail premiere

Airwolf II - The Stavograd Incident

CIC VHR 1246
USA 1987 Price £7.99

Certificate PG Director Ken Jubenvill
Producers Michael MacMillan, Jonathan Goodwill Screenplay Sydney Burrows Lead Actors Barry Van Dyke, Geraint Wyn Davies, Michelle Scarabelli 82 minutes
Jingoistic action-pic with a US super-helicopter coming to the rescue of the Russians after a nuclear disaster.

American Flyers

Warner PES 11520
USA 1985 Price £10.20

Certificate PG Director John Badham
A barely recognisable Kevin Costner

battles with his brother and the fear of a hereditary disease while competing in a bike race.

Bloodhounds of Broadway

RCA/Columbia CVR 22455
USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director/Producer Howard Brookner Screenplay Howard Brookner, Colman DeKay Photography Elliott Davis Lead Actors Madonna, Rutger Hauer, Matt Dillon, Randy Quaid 87 minutes
Set against the backdrop of the speakeasy era, this is a flat mixture of hoods and femme fatales.

Dangerous Curves

First Fun VA 30161
USA 1987 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director David Lewis
Producers Mark Borde, Kenneth M. Raich Screenplay Michael Dugan, Michael Zand, Paul Brown Lead Actors Tate Donovan, Leslie Nielsen, Danielle Von Zerneck 90 minutes
Sophomore fantasy about fast cars and under-dressed women. Leslie Nielsen wisely keeps his distance.

Hot Pursuit

First Fun VA 30160
USA 1987 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Steven Lisberger
Producers Pierre David, Theodore R. Parvin Screenplay Steven Lisberger, Steven Carabastos Photography Frank Tidy Lead Actors John Cusack, Robert Loggia, Wendy Gazelle 88 minutes
Cusack, after missing the plane which was to take him on holiday with his girlfriend, spends the rest of the movie trying to catch up. Very tiresome.

Hunk

First Fun VA 30158
USA 1986 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Lawrence Bassoff
Producer Marilyn J. Tenser Screenplay Lawrence Bassoff Photography Bryan England Lead Actors John Allen Nelson, Steve Levitt 98 minutes
Witless comedy about a modern Faust who sells his soul for a chance to pick up girls and drive big cars.



Dogged: 'Stalker'

Loose Cannons

RCA/Columbia CVR 22057
USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Bob Clark
Producer Aaron Spelling Screenplay Richard Matheson, Richard C. Matheson Lead Actors Dan Aykroyd, Gene Hackman, Nancy Travis 90 minutes
Spy-caper comedy that misses all its targets. Schizophrenic cop Aykroyd and partner Gene Hackman have to protect a porn-peddler cum federal witness.

Party Camp

First Fun VA 30162
USA 1986 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Gary Graver
Producer Mark Borde Screenplay Paul L. Brown Lead Actors Bill Jakoby, Andrew Ross 92 minutes
The mindless adventures of a group of noisy teenagers at Camp Chipmunk.

Sink the Bismark!

FoxVideo 1812
UK 1960 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director Lewis Gilbert
Deep in a Whitehall war-room, Kenneth More dispatches warships under the admiring gaze of Dana Wynter. B/W

Sundown

First Fun VA 30163
USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Anthony Hickox
Producer Jefferson Richard Screenplay John Burgess, Anthony Hickox Lead Actors David Carradine, Maxwell Caulfield, Morgan Brittany 99 minutes
'Vampire-Western' with everyone wearing sunglasses - perhaps out of embarrassment.

Tora! Tora! Tora!

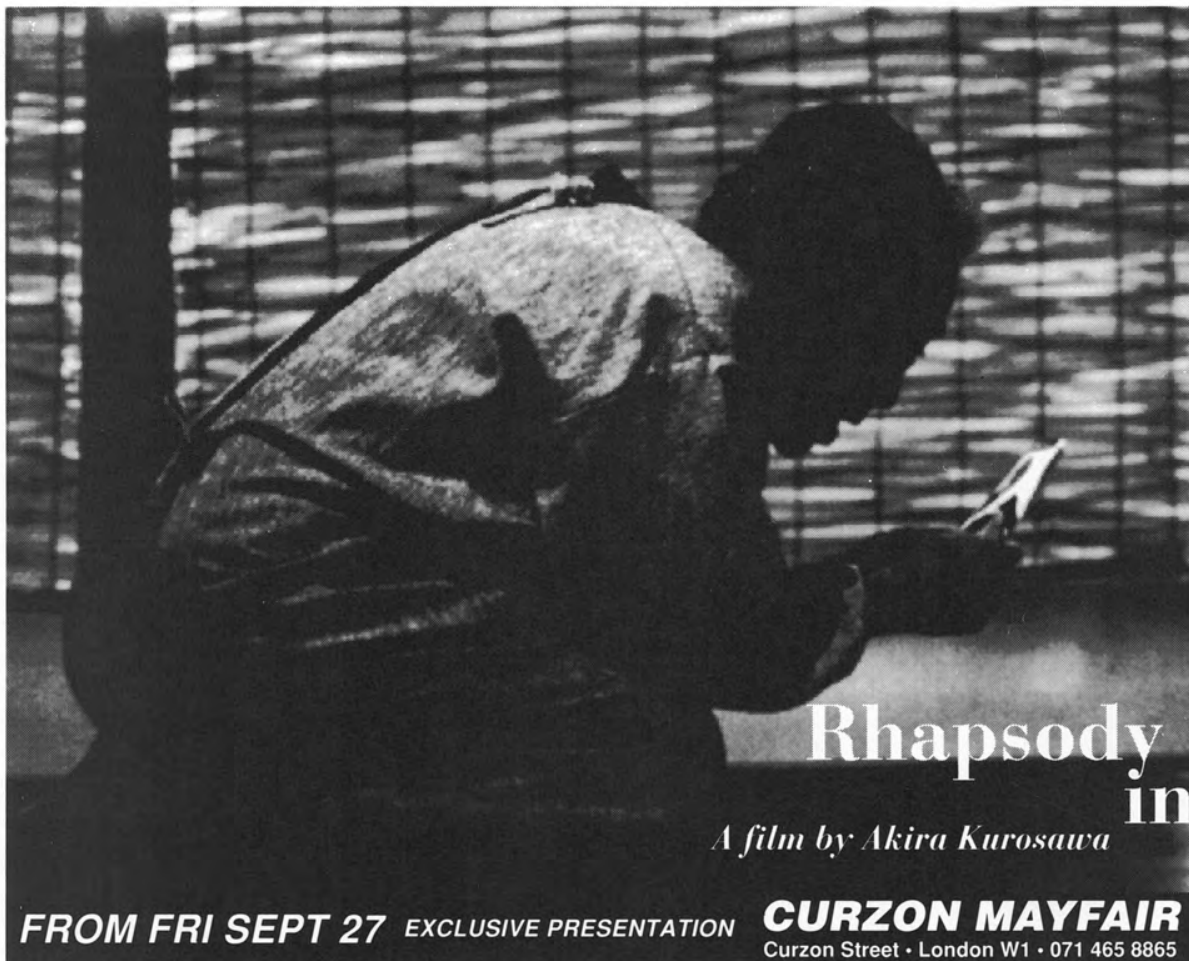
FoxVideo 1017
USA/Japan 1970 Price £12.99

Certificate U Directors Richard Fleischer, Toshio Masuda, Kinji Fukasaku
A diplomatic nobody-at-fault war movie which leaves you crying for heroes and villains.

Touch and Go

First Fun VA 30159
USA 1985 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Robert Mandel
Producer Stephen Friedman Screenplay Alan Ormsby, Bob Sand, Harry Colomby Photography Richard H. Kline Lead Actors Michael Keaton, Maria Conchita Alonso 97 minutes
Early Michael Keaton comedy which has him trying to avoid the attentions of a single mother and her teen mugger son.



Rhapsody in August

A film by Akira Kurosawa

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1991

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Rhapsody in August

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Tomoko Ohtakara
Mie Suzuki
Mitsunori Isaki
Hisashi Igawa
Toshie Negishi
Choichiro Kawarasaki
Narumi Kayashima

Executive Producer

Toru Ouyama

Produced by

Hiaro Kurosawa

From the novel

Nabe-no-naka

by

Kiyoko Murata

Produced by

Kurosawa Production

Presented by

Feature Film Enterprise 2

Shochiku Co., Ltd.



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The 16th Hong Kong International Film Festival

April 10-25, 1992

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Letters

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

The art of editing

From Colm Flynn

In response to Peter Cox (Letters, S&S July 1991), surely the old dogma that "the secret of the Seventh Art is editing" has been laid to rest by critics and practitioners as diverse as André Bazin, V. F. Perkins and Andrei Tarkovsky.

The idea that editing is the creative process in cinema was developed at a time when cinema was regarded as nothing more than a burlesque peep show created by non-artistic mechanical reproduction. Eisenstein and the other montage theorists sought to defend the artistic possibilities of the new medium by equating its 'essence', which was decided to be editing, with qualities existing in other arts. To quote Pudovkin: "To the film director each shot of the finished film subserves the same purpose as the word to the poet". And again on Kuleshov: "He maintained that film-art does not begin when actors act and various scenes are shot... Film-art begins from the moment the director begins to combine and join the various pieces of film".

These theories built considerable respectability for film as art in their day, but as you can see they took no account of acting, characterisation or drama and movies which used these were despised as 'filmed theatre'. Lighting and camerawork were also disregarded; synchronous sound could find no place within this dogma. The reason that such a large part of the film-making process had to be ignored was that in their zeal, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Kuleshov *et al* were wrong; editing is no more (or less) the essence of cinema than any of its other elements.

Montage was a useful device for overcoming the drawbacks of silent film; it is still a powerful technique, but no more than that. Its strengths lie in its didactic simplicity and borrowing from literary symbolism that Mr Cox would seem to condemn. The lack of subtlety in this method means that montage has been most usually exploited by directors with a political point to make, where ambiguity would be a disadvantage: Eisenstein's *October*; Pudovkin's *The End of St Petersburg*; and at the other end of the political scale Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. The principle is applied not to "induce motion in an audience", but to tell them what to think.

The more that people like Mr Cox insist on editing as the one true creative process of cinema and criticise film-makers for their "alien methodology", the more they will bind the hands of aspiring artists who wish to use all the means at their disposal. Sheffield

Elitist stance

From Zoé Thérèse

Glancing at Bethany Haye's Paris article (S&S September 1991) I immediately recalled Jean-Luc Godard's conversation with Colin MacCabe at the NFT Confer-

ence, 'Screening Europe: Images of Post-Colonialism' in June. While your author logically acknowledges the relevance of Canal Plus and CB 2000 for their contribution towards the fertile flavour of current French cinema, Godard, Le Maître (granted from an elitist stance) chose to casually dismiss the whole notion of TV in relation to film as a medium "made in offices" and claimed his personal view that there is "no French cinema... only French film-makers".

As a welcome balance to his summation, the facts in your article tended to restore my sense of faith in France's consistent nurturing of its outstanding national creative corps.

London NW6

Right but mad

From Roz Kaveney

One of the strengths of James Cameron as auteur is surely his capacity for subtle ironies, and for simultaneously stating something and undercutting it. In *Terminator 2* (S&S September 1991), as in its predecessor, we are entitled to see the off-screen adult John Connor as Messiah, and his initials bear this out – but he is also the impresario, the auteur indeed of the action, sharing those initials with Cameron himself.

The fact that Sarah is right about the future, and right to be concerned about it, does not mean that she is sane; one of the strengths of the film is that, in as much as she is its narrator, she is a deeply unreliable one. The fact that she sees the Terminator as the ideal father figure for her son does not mean that she is right, or that the rather cleverer boy sees him in that light – on the contrary, the boy, benevolently and admiringly, but not without an edge of contempt, treats the Terminator as a combination of hick coeval, who needs to have slang explained to him, and loyal pet. The boy's tears are less for a father than for a dog – this is the splatterpunk remake of *Lassie Come Home*.

The literal doubling of Sarah by the shape-changing T-1000 parallels the way that on her way to kill Dyson, Sarah's posture recapitulates that of the original Terminator in the first film. Sarah is right, but she is also barking mad.

The film is less inconsistent with the first than Tony Rayns claims; a lot of people saw the original T-800, but none of those who saw him clearly lived to tell the tale. Cameron is probably over-subtle in his use of Silberman, who was, you will recall, the only survivor of the precinct station where Sarah and Kyle were held; if he chooses to regard Sarah as simply deluded, this is necessary to his own sanity – because, if she is right, madness, or political actions which involve one in madness, are the only sane policies.

And indeed the last sight we have of him is his face crumbling in horror at the sight of the T-1000 walking through a metal door – he now has proof he cannot describe as self-referential. This could have been spelled out in more detail – but it is a pleasant grace note to the film.

To describe Cameron as a ring-master is



Out to kill: Linda Hamilton as Sarah in 'Terminator 2'

fair in another respect though; by now it is clear that he is one of the best directors of ensemble, whether of named actors or of extras, in the business. The staff of the mental hospital, like the marines in *Aliens* or the crew in *The Abyss*, are individuals, if stereotyped ones. Accounts of his technique by extras – he discusses with them such niceties as whether a steel worker we see for ten seconds should drop or retain his clipboard – bear this out.

He is also a good director of children – if it is with apparent effortlessness that Edward Furlong steals the film from his elders, the effort is Cameron's. One JC after all deserves another.

London E2

Common censorship

From Daniell Timothy Morrissey

I am researching into the possibility of integrating film classifications, and harmonising film censorship laws throughout Europe. I am currently in the process of communicating with the relevant classification boards in each of the twelve EC countries. Evidence to date suggests varying laws with regard to film and video, and various bodies involved in, or responsible for, classifying processes.

In 1986 the European Commission issued a Broadcasting Directive, following its first Green Paper, 'Television Without Frontiers', which proposed a common market for television (and radio). Much attention has been given to its harmonisation of law regarding advertising and its proposals for a domestic quota. It thus follows that there should be some discussion of harmonising the laws regarding film 'censorship' and of integrating the methods of classifying films and videos throughout Europe as one single market.

To date I have found no previous discussion on this matter. In 1983, at the height of the 'video nasty' moral panic, the European Parliament gave "outline approval" for a Videogram Inspection Office, and noted that under Article 36 of the Treaty of Rome, a restriction to free trade could be made "on grounds of public morality", and this could be used to stop the import of "undesirable" videograms. However I have not found any other details about any such office, and indeed the European Parliament tells me that "the area of harmonising classification bands and the integration of a common censorship policy for the European Community is severely lacking".

What implications will the 'Frontier Free Europe' post 1992 have for the British Board of Film Classification? Will the removal of trade restrictions and easier customs' clearance allow material not approved by the BBFC into Britain The spirit and letter of the Treaty of Rome favour free trade. As an economic activity, the free trade of cinema-release films and videos is not possible with different classification requirements in each of the twelve countries. Such integration would be no more complex than that of broadcasting, which has received a great deal of research and discussion.

72c Old Dover Road, London SE3

City of the future

Benjamin Woolley

It's called the soft city, capital of the 'empire of signs', a place where every surface is a screen. Tokyo is less a city than a scratch video of urban images. Or so the theory goes.

Walking along its tangled alleyways, you begin to understand why. What the Japanese lack in house furnishings they more than make up for in the streets. Every road is a riot of poles, signs, stalls, booths and other street furniture. Overhead is a cat's-cradle of telegraph and power lines interrupted only by formations of flyovers. There are no grand vistas or perpendicular streetplans to supply a single point of view, no 'algorithm' that enables you to work out where you are. There is only a bubbling bustle brought to the boil by a superheated economy.

Is this, then, a new urban archetype, a new sort of city, a place really equal to its billing as the 'city of the future'? Two cultish visions say it is. Both are, in a sense, cinematic, though only one of them appeared on film.

The first is the science fiction novel *Neuromancer* by William Gibson. Though it was never made into a film, reading it is a bit like watching one. Its personal narrative is set against a spectacular 70mm, colour-saturated urban set, a world Gibson characterises as the "Sprawl". The Sprawl can be seen as the successor to Superman's Metropolis. Where Metropolis has perfect symmetry, the Sprawl sprawls indetermi-

nately. There are no city limits, no green belts to mark the boundary between town and country, just a melt of anonymous metropolitan districts. The Sprawl exists as much in the traffic that flows through its communications and transport networks as in a collection buildings.

The other vision of a new, Tokyo-like archetype is Ridley Scott's film, *Bladerunner*. This represented the city as an almost literal urban jungle, having vertical rather than the usual horizontal social and economic strata. Over a canopy of pollution and cables soared the corporate skyscrapers. At ground level lay the undergrowth of street life in the perpetual night of chemical fog and acid rain. And between flew advertising blimps and police patrols.

It was a beautifully realised scheme, a clear vision of the city as existing in a state of constant instability that nevertheless achieves some almost natural balance. It was by no means a utopia, but nor was it a dystopia, because it was not the product of human reason. It was a whole greater than the sum of its parts, a system over which no individual could have control.

The design of the *Bladerunner* urban landscape was inspired by the Californian designer and 'Futurist', Syd Mead. Mead is now engaged in designing a vision of Tokyo as the city of the future for Bandai, a Japanese games company. Scanning maps and pictures into his computer, he has produced a classically futuristic image of the Sprawl, in a crustation of high-rises surrounding Tokyo Bay. The result is being



Over a canopy of pollution and cables soared the corporate skyscrapers. At ground level lay the undergrowth of street life in perpetual night...

used in a laser disk (a video equivalent of CD) which will be published by Bandai as a celebration of Mead's cinema work.

Syd Mead's creation is one of a growing number of works that reflect Tokyo's city of the future aspirations. Most have been inspired by the *Manga* cartoon magazines that so absorb the Japanese population. The best-known *Manga* film is the animated feature *Akira*, which had some modest international success. Bandai has now produced another called *Patlabor*.

The problem with these first attempts to set up Tokyo as an archetype is that they are trying to transform it into another Metropolis. What absorbs the *Manga* writers is both the building of skyscrapers in Tokyo's mock-Manhattan Shinjuku district and the *yakuza* gangs. *Akira* dwells on urban decay and crime, both of which are uniquely absent. Tokyo is one of the few cities where the streets feel safe.

And so the features that characterise Tokyo – the chaos, the complexity, the architectural anarchy – are pushed into the background as the old urban model reasserts itself. No existing city, of course, fits in with fiction. *Neuromancer* may have been partly inspired by the idea of Tokyo (there are references to Chiba prefecture), but Gibson freely admits that he had not visited the city when he wrote the book; there was no need to. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean that Tokyo's unique, distinctly non-Metropolitan features should be ignored. We've lived in Metropolis too long. It's time to move to somewhere new.

Professor Potemkin's competition

For our August competition, we took advantage of a dry spell to descend into deeper levels of our archive vaults – areas which spend most of the year submerged in the swirling mud of a Thames Water treatment plant outfall – and dug out a still from a half-forgotten black and white film made in 1961, printed with slimy black eruptions dripping from the image. About half the readership identified it at once, and I had to hire two secretaries to join me on my beach holiday in Margate to help sort through all the entries.

This was quite a contrast to the July competition, which displayed the half-eaten remains of a 1982 film still which hardly anybody recognised. In future I expect entries to come with a ticket stub attached as proof that some of you do still go to the cinema.

The secret of the ooze was, *bien évidemment*, the impenetrable



Alain Resnais classic 'L'Année dernière à Marienbad', with Giorgio Albertazzi, the late Delphine Seyrig and a quantity of ornate and rather vulgar furniture. Almost everybody got this right apart from cheeky C. R. Williams of Weymouth, who suggested the film to be an

unreleased version of 'Separate Tables' so dire that the actors had insisted on covering their faces to avoid recognition.

As to the caption, most entries took advantage of the geographical opportunity offered to animadvert against various of our own

provincial towns and cities.

Example (Mr Buck of Sidcup): "Surely it was two years ago in Swansea". Other popular targets were Scunthorpe, Scarborough and Stenhousemuir. But our prize (a copy of 'Cyrano de Bergerac') goes to Paul Tate of Oadby, Leicester, who suggested "OK, it's a date. Next year in Marienbad, but on Karaoke night".

Mr Tate also won Competition 1 back in May, and so becomes Your Man To Beat. Outwit him today with a bold, witty entry for this month's Missing Mugs contest. As usual – name the actors, supply the dialogue, and win a brand new cassette copy of the Connoisseur release of Sluizer's 'The Vanishing' (usually £14.99).

Cards or faxes by 15 October, please, to Professor Potemkin, Sight and Sound, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (Fax 071 436 2327). *A la prochaine.*

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